

# ≈ CAPITAL ≈

by  
KARL MARX

*Abridged  
with an Introduction by  
John Strachey*

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*Karl Marx was born at Trier (Trèves) on May 5, 1818, and educated there and at the Universities of Bonn, Berlin, and Jena. He lived in London, except for short visits to the Continent, from 1849, and died there on March 14, 1883.*

*His principal publications were "The Poverty of Philosophy" (1847), "The Communist Manifesto" (with Engels, 1848), "Critique of Political Economy" (1859), and "Capital" (Volume I., 1867; Volumes II. and III., posthumous, 1885, 1894). All these were written in German.*

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Messrs. Allen & Unwin have in preparation a complete reprint of Volume I. of *Capital* in this translation.

## CAPITAL

## INTRODUCTION

THE system of economic thought founded by Karl Marx differs profoundly from the economics which are taught in British and American universities to-day.

This fact is well known. But it is often supposed that the two systems differ in that they provide different answers to the same questions. This, however, is not so. The fact is that they ask different questions. Hence it is only natural that they should arrive at different answers. Marx set out upon a basically different inquiry from that which any other economist had ever undertaken. Until this fact is realized no comprehension of his work is possible.

The economists, Adam Smith and Ricardo in England, and the French physiocrats, who founded non-Marxist economic science, lived at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries. Now these great men lived under an economic system which was only partially capitalist. They lived under what was called the mercantile, or mercantilist, system. This system was the last of a series of economic arrangements, each of which represented a transition stage in

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the long and confused process by which feudalism was transformed into capitalism.

The essential characteristic of the mercantilist system was that both industry and trade were regulated by a most elaborate series of laws and rules. Not only was foreign trade regulated by all manner of tariffs and other provisos (of which the Navigation Acts were typical), but home production was controlled by laws, which frequently laid down the wages which employers must pay, the hours which they could work their employees, and, in many cases, the price at which they must sell their goods. The message of the economists was that all these regulations had become unnecessary and indeed pernicious. Sweep them all away, the economists advised the statesmen of their day. Allow the employers to hire labour on any conditions they like, and to sell their goods at any price they can get, and (as Adam Smith put it) the wealth of nations will be enormously increased.

Now this demand of the economists amounted, in the circumstances of the time, to nothing less than the demand that modern capitalism should be established. Thus non-Marxist economic thought was originally, and has in essence remained, a criticism of pre-capitalist conditions and a demand for the establishment of fully developed capitalism. The economic science taught in our universities still has this character. For, although capitalism has been long ago

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established, it is still necessary for the economists continually to explain to people what are its essential principles. And the basic principle of capitalism, which the economists are still engaged in emphasizing, is the principle of non-interference with the capitalists (*i.e.* those people who own the means of production), so that they should be allowed to buy and sell as they please. Above all, say the economists, it is necessary that the capitalists should be allowed to buy the ability to labour of the non-capitalists on any conditions they like. (The reader can easily verify the assertion that the message of our economists is still in essence what it was in the days of Adam Smith by picking up one of their latest books, such, for example, as the treatises of Professor Robbins of London University, one of the most brilliant of the younger men.)

Now the essential thing to realize, when one comes to read Marx's works, is that he is engaged on a different inquiry. He is not intent to show what are the conditions necessary to the functioning of the capitalist system. In a sense he starts where the other economists leave off. In a sense he takes for granted that fully developed capitalism has already been established. What Marx is interested in is not to show the advantages of capitalism over pre-capitalist conditions, as Adam Smith and Ricardo did, or to defend capitalism against any tendency to re-introduce pre-capitalist

regulations and interferences, as modern non-Marxist economists do ; what Marx is interested in is to investigate the question of what will be the economic, social, and political consequences of organizing a community's economic life on this new basis of fully established capitalism. His conclusion is that although for a definite historical period this economic system will enjoy great success, that although it will serve a great purpose by industrializing the world, yet in the end it will create disastrous and intolerable conditions for the immense majority of the community. Hence he concludes that just as pre-capitalist conditions had to give way to capitalism, so capitalism must, in its turn, give way to a new economic system, which he called socialism. In a word, just as non-Marxist economics are a criticism of pre-capitalist conditions and a demand for capitalism, so Marxist economics are a criticism of capitalism and a demand for socialism. Once the reader has realized this fundamental difference in the nature of the inquiries, he or she should not have any great difficulty in understanding the basic nature of both. But unless he understands this difference, he is almost bound to become seriously confused.

This book is an abridgment of Marx's principal work, *Capital*. The reader must understand that it has been possible to include only a very small part of

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this enormous work. *Capital* is in three volumes, of which the first contains some 850 pages, the second some 600, and the third over 1,000 pages. The extracts in this book take up only 150 pages, all in the first volume. Hence the reader must not suppose that by reading this book he can achieve a full understanding of Marxist economics. I believe, however, that it has been possible to select extracts which may serve as a useful introduction to the study of Marx's economic views.

The extracts in this book deal with three of the leading ideas put forward by Marx. The first extract comes almost at the end of the first volume of *Capital*. It consists of Part VIII. of Volume I., and is called "Primitive Accumulation." This Part is really an account of how feudalism turned into capitalism. Marx put this chapter at the end of Volume I. because his book is analytical not historical. He first analyses and explains what capitalism is, and only then describes how such a system has come into being. But for our purpose it will be useful to read this chapter first. By doing so, the reader is shown at the outset that Marx regards capitalism as one of a series of economic systems under which men have lived. It was preceded by feudalism and will be succeeded by socialism. It has its own laws of existence, which for it are unbreakable; but these laws did not apply to

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the preceding system and will not apply to capitalism's successor. Capitalism did not come into being automatically or by chance, but was, on the contrary, established by three centuries of bitter and bloody struggle on the part of those who were destined to become capitalists.

The second group of extracts consists of the opening passage of *Capital* in which the basic theory of Marxist economics is demonstrated, namely, the labour theory of value.

Finally, the third group of extracts analyses minutely the essential process of capitalism, namely, profit-making. Marx pointed out that the be-all and end-all of this system is the making of profit. It is for this purpose alone that production in capitalist societies is carried on. He asks and answers the basic question, where do the capitalist's profits come from ?

I believe that, if the reader reads these extracts from *Capital* with care and attention, he or she will be driven to make a study of Marxism. Naturally, that requires work. Marxism is a science. And, like other sciences, it cannot be mastered by reading abridgments, or still less by gossiping about it with persons whose own knowledge of it is confined to hearsay. Just as the only way to learn chemistry or biology is to read the main works on those sciences, so the only way to master Marxism is to read the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin.



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These extracts are taken from the first translation into English of *Capital*. This translation was made by Edward Aveling and edited by Engels. As the reader will probably agree, it is by no means perfect, but it is a reliable, working version. Contrary to the usual practice in the case of abridgments, I have included the footnotes to the parts of *Capital* here reproduced. Naturally, if the footnotes had been omitted, more text could have been included. But, particularly in the historical sections, the footnotes to *Capital* form some of the most valuable things in the book. The whole flavour and richness of *Capital* would be lost without them. Hence it seemed to me best to give the reader less, but to give him what he got complete as Marx wrote it.

I hope and believe that this book of extracts will make many of the innumerable men and women who are to-day searching for light in the thickening darkness of our epoch, turn to the study of *Capital*. *Capital* is one of the two or three books which have changed the history of the world. No such book can be easy to master. But equally the intellectual effort required to master such a book can never be wasted.

E. J. S.

## THE SECRET OF PRIMITIVE ACCUMULATION

The extract which immediately follows forms the eighth and last part of the first volume of *Capital*, which comprises Chapters 26 to 33. I have left out Chapter 33, however. This last chapter is called "The Modern Theory of Colonization." It is very fascinating, but I have always felt that Marx ought to have made it into an Appendix, for the volume really ends with Chapter 32, which is called "The Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation." This chapter contains the famous peroration of *Capital*, the passage on "the expropriation of the expropriators."

The reader will notice that this extract begins with a summary of what the rest of the volume has contained. Marx is saying that up to now he has explained how capitalism works, once it has got going ; but as yet he has given no explanation of how the original quantities of capital, without which the system cannot exist, came into existence. There must, he writes, have been some process outside of the ordinary workings of the system which set the whole mechanism going. What was that process ? It was, he goes on to say, primitive accumulation. Adam Smith and preceding economists were agreed that this original process of accumulation had taken place. But they had attributed it to the thriftiness of the virtuous apprentices of the pre-capitalist epoch, who had become capitalists by saving up their pennies. That is a story, says Marx, fit for the nursery alone.

Then Marx goes on to give a description of the real process of primitive accumulation. This description forms what is at

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once the most brilliant and the most terrible part of *Capital*. The argument is this: Once upon a time, though the English people have almost forgotten it, the means of production and, above all, the land (which in those days was the essential means of production) were owned by almost everybody. Almost everybody, that is to say, had some share, either by way of an individual plot of land of his own, or of rights over common land owned by a village community, or both, in the land of England. So they could produce food and clothing for themselves without the permission of anybody else. They were independent.

The foundation of the capitalist system consisted, essentially, in taking the land (and the other means of production, but in those days these were not so important) away from the people of England and concentrating them in the hands of a small class. Once this had been done, the new owners of the land and the other means of production were able to make the rest of the community, who were now without property in the means of production, work for them for wages. And (we shall see how below) the owners were thus able to make a profit out of their work.

This process of the dispossession of the people of England was a double one. For under feudalism most Englishmen, though they owned some land, were semi-serfs to feudal overlords, to whom they paid tribute. And the process by which they lost their land also made them freemen. It abolished serfdom. But our ordinary history books lay all the stress on the process by which our ancestors were freed from the *landlords*, and slur over the fact that at the same time they were freed from the *land*.

Marx goes on to a detailed analysis of how this fundamental process of the driving, by force, of the people of England off the land set up the capitalist system. Chapter 30, "Reaction of the Agricultural Revolution on Industry: Creation of the Home Market for Industrial Capital," describes how this happened.

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Chapter 31, "Genesis of the Industrial Capitalist," brings in a new theme. In Britain the new capitalist class got hold of their initial capital, which set them up in business, not only by taking the land from the people, but also by colonial plunder. Marx lets himself go in describing the process by which the 17th and 18th century merchants plundered the world. The basis of their operations was slavery and the slave trade. Whole continents were pillaged of their inhabitants for the benefit of the British, Dutch, French, and Spanish merchants. It was one of the most frightful processes that has ever taken place in human history. It needs a strong stomach to read this chapter. But these are historical facts which cannot be denied, and which it is vital that we should face.

Finally we come to the famous peroration of *Capital*, Chapter 32, "The Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation." Naturally this passage ought to come at the end of the whole of the volume, and it inevitably loses some of its force if we read it before we have mastered Marx's whole argument. Still, if the reader will go through it two or three times very closely, he will, I think, see its essential point. The passage is a terse description of how the process of accumulation does not stop with the expropriation of the workers, of how the concentration of capital goes on, so that the small capitalists are gobbled up by the big ones, until the best part of the wealth of society is concentrated in the hands of a very few incredibly rich men. (Sir John Ellerman has just died leaving £36,000,000. Sir Basil Zaharoff has left £30,000,000. Lord Rothermere is said to possess £40,000,000. The greatest British banks and finance houses now control whole industries.) I think that the reader will be forced to the conclusion that Marx, writing some seventy years ago, really had understood the nature of capitalism, and was, consequently, able to predict what its development would be. For myself, I cannot deny that this passage seems to me one of the greatest ever penned by the hand of man. It combines an

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unmatched depth of scientific insight with a flaming passion for human justice. It has no parallel.—E. J. S.

WE have seen how money is changed into capital ; how through capital surplus-value is made, and from surplus-value more capital. But the accumulation of capital presupposes surplus-value ; surplus-value presupposes capitalistic production ; capitalistic production presupposes the pre-existence of considerable masses of capital and of labour-power in the hands of producers of commodities. The whole movement, therefore, seems to turn in a vicious circle, out of which we can only get by supposing a primitive accumulation (previous accumulation of Adam Smith) preceding capitalistic accumulation ; an accumulation not the result of the capitalist mode of production, but its starting-point.

This primitive accumulation plays in Political Economy about the same part as original sin in theology. Adam bit the apple, and thereupon sin fell on the human race. Its origin is supposed to be explained when it is told as an anecdote of the past. In times long gone by there were two sorts of people ; one, the diligent, intelligent, and, above all, frugal élite ; the other, lazy rascals, spending their substance, and more, in riotous living. The legend of theological original sin tells us certainly how man came to be condemned to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow ;

but the history of economic original sin reveals to us that there are people to whom this is by no means essential. Never mind ! Thus it came to pass that the former sort accumulated wealth, and the latter sort had at last nothing to sell except their own skins. And from this original sin dates the poverty of the great majority that, despite all its labour, has up to now nothing to sell but itself, and the wealth of the few that increases constantly although they have long ceased to work. Such insipid childishness is every day preached to us in the defence of property. M. Thiers, *e.g.*, had the assurance to repeat it with all the solemnity of a statesman, to the French people, once so *spirituel*. But as soon as the question of property crops up, it becomes a sacred duty to proclaim the intellectual food of the infant as the one thing fit for all ages and for all stages of development. In actual history it is notorious that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, briefly force, play the great part. In the tender annals of Political Economy, the idyllic reigns from time immemorial. Right and "labour" were from all time the sole means of enrichment, the present year of course always excepted. As a matter of fact, the methods of primitive accumulation are anything but idyllic.

In themselves, money and commodities are no more capital than are the means of production and of subsistence. They want transforming into capital. But

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this transformation itself can only take place under certain circumstances that centre in this, viz., that two very different kinds of commodity-possessors must come face to face and into contact ; on the one hand, the owners of money, means of production, means of subsistence, who are eager to increase the sum of values they possess, by buying other people's labour-power ; on the other hand, free labourers, the sellers of their own labour-power, and therefore the sellers of labour. Free labourers, in the double sense that neither they themselves form part and parcel of the means of production, as in the case of slaves, bondsmen, &c., nor do the means of production belong to them, as in the case of peasant-proprietors ; they are, therefore, free from, unencumbered by, any means of production of their own. With this polarization of the market for commodities, the fundamental conditions of capitalist production are given. The capitalist system presupposes the complete separation of the labourers from all property in the means by which they can realize their labour. As soon as capitalist production is once on its own legs, it not only maintains this separation, but reproduces it on a continually extending scale. The process, therefore, that clears the way for the capitalist system, can be none other than the process which takes away from the labourer the possession of his means of production ; a process that transforms, on the one hand, the social

means of subsistence and of production into capital, on the other, the immediate producers into wage-labourers. The so-called primitive accumulation, therefore, is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production. It appears as primitive, because it forms the pre-historic stage of capital and of the mode of production corresponding with it.

The economic structure of capitalistic society has grown out of the economic structure of feudal society. The dissolution of the latter set free the elements of the former.

The immediate producer, the labourer, could only dispose of his own person after he had ceased to be attached to the soil and ceased to be the slave, serf, or bondman of another. To become a free seller of labour-power, who carries his commodity wherever he finds a market, he must further have escaped from the régime of the guilds, their rules for apprentices and journeymen, and the impediments of their labour regulations. Hence the historical movement, which changes the producers into wage-workers, appears, on the one hand, as their emancipation from serfdom and from the fetters of the guilds, and this side alone exists for our bourgeois historians. But, on the other hand, these new freed-men became sellers of themselves only after they had been robbed of all their own means of production, and of all the guarantees of existence



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afforded by the old feudal arrangements. And the history of this, their expropriation, is written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire.

The industrial capitalists, these new potentates, had on their part not only to displace the guild masters of handicrafts, but also the feudal lords, the possessors of the sources of wealth. In this respect their conquest of social power appears as the fruit of a victorious struggle both against feudal lordship and its revolting prerogatives, and against the guilds and the fetters they laid on the free development of production and the free exploitation of man by man. The chevaliers d'industrie, however, only succeeded in supplanting the chevaliers of the sword by making use of events of which they themselves were wholly innocent. They have risen by means as vile as those by which the Roman freed-man once on a time made himself the master of his *patronus*.

The starting-point of the development that gave rise to the wage-labourer as well as to the capitalist was the servitude of the labourer. The advance consisted in a change of form of this servitude, in the transformation of feudal exploitation into capitalist exploitation. To understand its march, we need not go back very far. Although we come across the first beginnings of capitalist production as early as the 14th or 15th century, sporadically, in certain towns of the Mediterranean, the capitalistic era dates from the

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16th century. Wherever it appears, the abolition of serfdom has been long effected, and the highest development of the middle ages, the existence of sovereign towns, has been long on the wane.

In the history of primitive accumulation, all revolutions are epoch-making that act as levers for the capitalist class in course of formation ; but, above all, those moments when great masses of men are suddenly and forcibly torn from their means of subsistence, and hurled as free and "unattached" proletarians on the labour market. The expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasant, from the soil, is the basis of the whole process. The history of this expropriation, in different countries, assumes different aspects, and runs through its various phases in different orders of succession, and at different periods. In England alone, which we take as our example, has it the classic form.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Italy, where capitalistic production developed earliest, the dissolution of serfdom also took place earlier than elsewhere. The serf was emancipated in that country before he had acquired any prescriptive right to the soil. His emancipation at once transformed him into a free proletarian, who, moreover, found his master ready waiting for him in the towns, for the most part handed down as legacies from the Roman time. When the revolution of the world-market, about the end of the 15th century, annihilated Northern Italy's commercial supremacy, a movement in the reverse direction set in. The labourers of the towns were driven *en masse* into the country, and gave an impulse, never before seen, to the *petite culture*, carried on in the form of gardening.

(All footnotes are by Marx unless otherwise indicated.)

## EXPROPRIATION OF THE AGRICULTURAL POPULATION FROM THE LAND

IN England, serfdom had practically disappeared in the last part of the 14th century. The immense majority of the population<sup>1</sup> consisted then, and to a still larger extent, in the 15th century, of free peasant proprietors, whatever was the feudal title under which their right of property was hidden. In the larger seignorial domains, the old bailiff, himself a serf, was displaced by the free farmer. The wage-labourers of agriculture consisted partly of peasants,

<sup>1</sup> "The petty proprietors who cultivated their own fields with their own hands, and enjoyed a modest competence . . . then formed a much more important part of the nation than at present. If we may trust the best statistical writers of that age, not less than 160,000 proprietors who, with their families, must have made up more than a seventh of the whole population, derived their subsistence from little freehold estates. The average income of these small landlords . . . was estimated at between £60 and £70 a year. It was computed that the number of persons who tilled their own land was greater than the number of those who farmed the land of others."—Macaulay, *History of England*, 10th ed., 1854, I., p. 333, 334. Even in the last third of the 17th century, four-fifths of the English people were agricultural. (I. c., p. 413.) I quote Macaulay, because as systematic falsifier of history he minimizes as much as possible facts of this kind.

who utilized their leisure time by working on the large estates, partly of an independent special class of wage-labourers, relatively and absolutely few in numbers. The latter also were practically at the same time peasant farmers, since, besides their wages, they had allotted to them arable land to the extent of 4 or more acres, together with their cottages. Besides they, with the rest of the peasants, enjoyed the usufruct of the common land, which gave pasture to their cattle, furnished them with timber, fire-wood, turf, &c.<sup>1</sup> In all countries of Europe, feudal production is characterized by division of the soil amongst the greatest possible number of sub-feudatories. The might of the feudal lord, like that of the sovereign, depended not on the length of his rent roll, but on the number of his subjects, and the latter depended on the number of peasant proprietors.<sup>2</sup> Although, therefore, the

<sup>1</sup> We must never forget that even the serf was not only the owner, if but a tribute-paying owner, of the piece of land attached to his house, but also a co-possessor of the common land. "Le paysan y (in Silesia, under Frederick II.) est serf." Nevertheless, these serfs possess common lands. "On n'a pas pu encore engager les Silésiens au partage des communes, tandis que dans la Nouvelle Marche, il n'y a guère de villages où ce partage ne soit exécuté avec le plus grand succès."—(Mirabeau, *De la Monarchie Prussienne*, Londres, 1788, t. ii., pp. 125, 126.)

<sup>2</sup> Japan, with its purely feudal organization of landed property and its developed *petite culture*, gives a much truer picture of the European middle ages than all our history books, dictated as these are, for the most part, by bourgeois prejudices. It is very convenient to be "liberal" at the expense of the middle ages.

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English land, after the Norman conquest, was distributed in gigantic baronies, one of which often included some 900 of the old Anglo-Saxon lordships, it was bestrewn with small peasant properties, only here and there interspersed with great seignorial domains. Such conditions, together with the prosperity of the towns so characteristic of the 15th century, allowed of that wealth of the people which Chancellor Fortescue so eloquently paints in his *Laudes legum Angliæ*; but it excluded the possibility of capitalistic wealth.

The prelude of the revolution that laid the foundation of the capitalist mode of production, was played in the last third of the 15th, and the first decade of the 16th century. A mass of free proletarians was hurled on the labour-market by the breaking-up of the bands of feudal retainers, who, as Sir James Steuart well says, "everywhere uselessly filled house and castle." Although the royal power, itself a product of bourgeois development, in its strife after absolute sovereignty forcibly hastened on the dissolution of these bands of retainers, it was by no means the sole cause of it. In insolent conflict with king and parliament, the great feudal lords created an incomparably larger proletariat by the forcible driving of the peasantry from the land, to which the latter had the same feudal right as the lord himself, and by the usurpation of the common lands. The rapid rise of the Flemish wool manufac-

tures, and the corresponding rise in the price of wool in England, gave the direct impulse to these evictions. The old nobility had been devoured by the great feudal wars. The new nobility was the child of its time, for which money was the power of all powers. Transformation of arable land into sheep-walks was, therefore, its cry. Harrison, in his *Description of England, prefixed to Holinshed's Chronicle*, describes how the expropriation of small peasants is ruining the country. "What care our great encroachers?" The dwellings of the peasants and the cottages of the labourers were razed to the ground or doomed to decay. "If," says Harrison, "the old records of euerie manour be sought . . . it will soon appear that in some manour seventene, eightene, or twentie houses are shrunk . . . that England was neuer less furnished with people than at the present. . . . Of cities and townes either utterly decaied or more than a quarter or half diminished, though some one be a little increased here or there; of townes pulled downe for sheepe-walks, and no more but the lordships now standing in them. . . . I could saie somewhat." The complaints of these old chroniclers are always exaggerated, but they reflect faithfully the impression made on contemporaries by the revolution in the conditions of production. A comparison of the writings of Chancellor Fortescue and Thomas More reveals the gulf between the 15th and 16th century. As

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Thornton rightly has it, the English working-class was precipitated without any transition from its golden into its iron age.

Legislation was terrified at this revolution. It did not yet stand on that height of civilization where the "wealth of the nation" (*i.e.*, the formation of capital, and the reckless exploitation and impoverishing of the mass of the people) figure as the *ultima Thule* of all state-craft. In his history of Henry VII., Bacon says: "Inclosures at that time (1489) began to be more frequent, whereby arable land (which could not be manured without people and families) was turned into pasture, which was easily rid by a few herdsmen; and tenancies for years, lives, and at will (whereupon much of the yeomanry lived) were turned into demesnes. This bred a decay of people, and (by consequence) a decay of towns, churches, tithes, and the like. . . . In remedying of this inconvenience the king's wisdom was admirable, and the parliament's at that time . . . they took a course to take away depopulating inclosures, and depopulating pasturage." An Act of Henry VII., 1489, cap. 19, forbade the destruction of all "houses of husbandry" to which at least 20 acres of land belonged. By an Act, 25 Henry VIII., the same law was renewed. It recites, among other things, that many farms and large flocks of cattle, especially of sheep, are concentrated in the hands of a few men, whereby the rent of land has much risen and

tillage has fallen off, churches and houses have been pulled down, and marvellous numbers of people have been deprived of the means wherewith to maintain themselves and their families. The Act, therefore, ordains the rebuilding of the decayed farm-steads, and fixes a proportion between cornland and pasture land, &c. An Act of 1533 recites that some owners possess 24,000 sheep, and limits the number to be owned to 2000.<sup>1</sup> The cry of the people and the legislation directed, for 150 years after Henry VII., against the expropriation of the small farmers and peasants, were alike fruitless. The secret of their inefficiency Bacon, without knowing it, reveals to us. "The device of King Henry VII.," says Bacon, in his *Essays, Civil and Moral*, Essay 29, "was profound and admirable, in making farms and houses of husbandry of a standard; that is, maintained with such a proportion of land unto them as may breed a subject to live in convenient plenty, and no servile condition, and to keep the plough in the hands of the owners and not mere hirelings."<sup>2</sup> What the capitalist system

<sup>1</sup> In his *Utopia*, Thomas More says, that in England "your shepe that were wont to be so meke and tame, and so smal eaters, now, as I heare saye, be become so great devourers and so wylde that they eate up, and swallow downe, the very men themselves." — *Utopia*, transl. by Robinson, ed. Arber, Lond., 1869, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Bacon shows the connection between a free, well-to-do peasantry and good infantry. "This did wonderfully concern the might and mannerhood of the kingdom to have farms as it were of a standard sufficient to maintain an able body out of penury, and



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demand was, on the other hand, a degraded and almost servile condition of the mass of the people, the transformation of them into mercenaries, and of their means of labour into capital. During this transformation period, legislation also strove to retain the 4 acres of land by the cottage of the agricultural wage-labourer, and forbade him to take lodgers into his cottage. In the reign of James I., 1627, Roger Crocker of Front Mill, was condemned for having built a cottage on the manor of Front Mill without 4 acres of land attached to the same in perpetuity. As late as Charles I.'s reign, 1638, a royal commission was appointed to enforce the carrying out of the old laws, especially that referring to the 4 acres of land. Even

did in effect amortize a great part of the lands of the kingdom unto the hold and occupation of the yeomanry or middle people, of a condition between gentlemen, and cottagers and peasants. . . . For it hath been held by the general opinion of men of best judgment in the wars . . . that the principal strength of an army consisteth in the infantry or foot. And to make good infantry it requireth men bred, not in a servile or indigent fashion, but in some free and plentiful manner. Therefore, if a state run most to noblemen and gentlemen, and that the husbandmen and ploughmen be but as their workfolk and labourers, or else mere cottagers (which are but hous'd beggars), you may have a good cavalry, but never good stable bands of foot. . . . And this is to be seen in France, and Italy, and some other parts abroad, where in effect all is noblesse or peasantry . . . insomuch that they are enforced to employ mercenary bands of Switzers and the like, for their battalions of foot ; whereby also it comes to pass that those nations have much people and few soldiers."—(*The Reign of Henry VII.*, verbatim reprint from Kenner's *England*, Ed. 1719, Lond., 1870, p. 308.)

in Cromwell's time, the building of a house within 4 miles of London was forbidden unless it was endowed with 4 acres of land. As late as the first half of the 18th century complaint is made if the cottage of the agricultural labourer has not an adjunct of one or two acres of land. Nowadays he is lucky if it is furnished with a little garden, or if he may rent, far away from his cottage, a few roods. "Landlords and farmers," says Dr. Hunter, "work here hand in hand. A few acres to the cottage would make the labourers too independent."<sup>1</sup>

The process of forcible expropriation of the people received in the 16th century a new and frightful impulse from the Reformation, and from the consequent colossal spoliation of the church property. The Catholic church was, at the time of the Reformation, feudal proprietor of a great part of the English land. The suppression of the monasteries, &c., hurled their inmates into the proletariat. The estates of the church were to a large extent given away to rapacious royal favourites, or sold at a nominal price to speculating farmers and citizens, who drove out, *en masse*, the hereditary sub-tenants and threw their holdings into one. The legally guaranteed property of the poorer

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Hunter, l. c., p. 134. "The quantity of land assigned (in the old laws) would now be judged too great for labourers, and rather as likely to convert them into small farmers."—(George Roberts, *The Social History of the People of the Southern Counties of England in past centuries*, Lond., 1856, pp. 184-185.)

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folk in a part of the church's tithes was tacitly confiscated.<sup>1</sup> "Pauper ubique jacet," cried Queen Elizabeth, after a journey through England. In the 43rd year of her reign the nation was obliged to recognize pauperism officially by the introduction of a poor-rate. "The authors of this law seem to have been ashamed to state the grounds of it, for [contrary to traditional usage] it has no preamble whatever."<sup>2</sup> By the 16th of Charles I., ch. 4, it was declared perpetual, and in fact only in 1834 did it take a new and harsher form.<sup>3</sup> These immediate results of the

<sup>1</sup> "The right of the poor to share in the tithe, is established by the tenour of ancient statutes."—(Tuckett, l. c., Vol. II., pp. 804–805.)

<sup>2</sup> William Cobbett : *A History of the Protestant Reformation*, § 471.

<sup>3</sup> The "spirit" of Protestantism may be seen from the following, among other things. In the south of England certain landed proprietors and well-to-do farmers put their heads together and propounded ten questions as to the right interpretation of the poor-law of Elizabeth. These they laid before a celebrated jurist of that time, Sergeant Snigge (later a judge under James I.) for his opinion. "Question 9—Some of the more wealthy farmers in the parish have devised a skilful mode by which all the trouble of executing this Act (the 43rd of Elizabeth) might be avoided. They have proposed that we shall erect a prison in the parish, and then give notice to the neighbourhood, that if any persons are disposed to farm the poor of this parish, they do give in sealed proposals, on a certain day, of the lowest price at which they will take them off our hands ; and that they will be authorized to refuse to any one unless he be shut up in the aforesaid prison. The proposers of this plan conceive that there will be found in the adjoining counties, persons, who, being unwilling to labour and not possessing substance or credit to take a farm or ship, so as to live without labour, may be induced to make a very advantageous offer to the parish. If any of the poor perish under the contractor's care, the sin will lie

Reformation were not its most lasting ones. The property of the church formed the religious bulwark of the traditional conditions of landed property. With its fall these were no longer tenable.<sup>1</sup>

Even in the last decade of the 17th century, the at his door, as the parish will have done its duty by them. We are, however, apprehensive that the present Act (43rd of Elizabeth) will not warrant a prudential measure of this kind ; but you are to learn that the rest of the freeholders of the county, and of the adjoining county of B, will very readily join in instructing their members to propose an Act to enable the parish to contract with a person to lock up and work the poor ; and to declare that if any person shall refuse to be so locked up and worked, he shall be entitled to no relief. This, it is hoped, will prevent persons in distress from wanting relief, and be the means of keeping down parishes.”—(R. Blakey, *The History of Political Literature from the earliest Times*, Lond., 1855, Vol. II., pp. 84, 85.) In Scotland, the abolition of serfdom took place some centuries later than in England. Even in 1698, Fletcher of Saltoun, declared in the Scotch parliament, “The number of beggars in Scotland is reckoned at not less than 200,000. The only remedy that I, a republican on principle, can suggest, is to restore the old state of serfdom, to make slaves of all those who are unable to provide for their own subsistence.” Eden, l. c., Book I., ch. 1, pp. 60–61, says, “The decrease of villenage seems necessarily to have been the era of the origin of the poor. Manufactures and commerce are the two parents of our national poor.” Eden, like our Scotch republican on principle, errs only in this : not the abolition of villenage, but the abolition of the property of the agricultural labourer in the soil made him a proletarian, and eventually a pauper. In France, where the expropriation was effected in another way, the ordinance of Moulins, 1571, and the Edict of 1656, correspond to the English poor laws.

<sup>1</sup> Professor Rogers, although formerly Professor of Political Economy in the University of Oxford, the hotbed of Protestant orthodoxy, in his preface to the *History of Agriculture* lays stress on the fact of the pauperization of the mass of the people by the Reformation.

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yeomanry, the class of independent peasants, were more numerous than the class of farmers. They had formed the backbone of Cromwell's strength, and, even according to the confession of Macaulay, stood in favourable contrast to the drunken squires and to their servants, the country clergy, who had to marry their masters' cast-off mistresses. About 1750, the yeomanry had disappeared,<sup>1</sup> and so had, in the last decade of the 18th century, the last trace of the common land of the agricultural labourer. We leave on one side here the purely economic causes of the agricultural revolution. We deal only with the forcible means employed.

After the restoration of the Stuarts, the landed proprietors carried, by legal means, an act of usurpation, effected everywhere on the Continent without any legal formality. They abolished the feudal tenure of land, *i.e.*, they got rid of all its obligations to the State, "indemnified" the State by taxes on the peasantry and the rest of the mass of the people,

<sup>1</sup> *A letter to Sir T. C. Banbury, Bart., on the High Price of Provisions.* By a Suffolk Gentleman. Ipswich, 1795, p. 4. Even the fanatical advocate of the system of large farms, the author of the *Inquiry into the connection of large farms, etc.*, London, 1773, p. 133, says: "I most lament the loss of our yeomanry, that set of men who really kept up the independence of this nation; and sorry I am to see their lands now in the hands of monopolizing lords, tenanted out to small farmers, who hold their leases on such conditions as to be little better than vassals ready to attend a summons on every mischievous occasion."

vindicated for themselves the rights of modern private property in estates to which they had only a feudal title, and, finally, passed those laws of settlement, which, *mutatis mutandis*, had the same effect on the English agricultural labourer, as the edict of the Tartar Boris Godunof on the Russian peasantry.

The "glorious Revolution" brought into power, along with William of Orange, the landlord and capitalist appropriators of surplus-value.<sup>1</sup> They inaugurated the new era by practising on a colossal scale thefts of state lands, thefts that had been hitherto managed more modestly. These estates were given away, sold at a ridiculous figure, or even annexed to private estates by direct seizure.<sup>2</sup> All this happened without the slightest observation of legal etiquette.

<sup>1</sup> On the private moral character of this bourgeois hero, among other things: "The large grant of lands in Ireland to Lady Orkney, in 1695, is a public instance of the king's affection, and the lady's influence . . . Lady Orkney's endearing offices are supposed to have been—*foeda laborum ministeria*."—(In the Sloane Manuscript Collection, at the British Museum, No. 4224. The Manuscript is entitled: "The charakter and behaviour of King William, Sunderland, &c., as represented in Original Letters to the Duke of Shrewsbury, from Somers Halifax, Oxford, Secretary Vernon, &c." It is full of curiosae.)

<sup>2</sup> "The illegal alienation of the Crown Estates, partly by sale and partly by gift, is a scandalous chapter in English history . . . a gigantic fraud on the nation."—(F. W. Newman, *Lectures on Political Economy*, London, 1851, pp. 129, 130.) [For details as to how the present large landed proprietors of England came into their possessions see *Our Old Nobility*, by Noblesse Oblige, London, 1879.—Ed.]

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The crown lands thus fraudulently appropriated, together with the robbery of the Church estates, as far as these had not been lost again during the republican revolution, form the basis of the to-day princely domains of the English oligarchy.<sup>1</sup> The bourgeois capitalists favoured the operation with the view, among others, to promoting free trade in land, to extending the domain of modern agriculture on the large farm-system, and to increasing their supply of the free agricultural proletarians ready to hand. Besides, the new landed aristocracy was the natural ally of the new bankocracy, of the newly-hatched *haute finance*, and of the large manufacturers, then depending on protective duties. The English bourgeoisie acted for its own interest quite as wisely as did the Swedish bourgeoisie who, reversing the process, hand in hand with their economic allies, the peasantry, helped the kings in the forcible resumption of the Crown lands from the oligarchy. This happened since 1604 under Charles X. and Charles XI.

Communal property—always distinct from the State property just dealt with—was an old Teutonic institution which lived on under cover of feudalism. We have seen how the forcible usurpation of this, generally accompanied by the turning of arable into pasture land, begins at the end of the 15th and extends

<sup>1</sup> Read, e.g., E. Burke's Pamphlet on the ducal house of Bedford, whose offshoot was Lord John Russell, the "tomtit of Liberalism."

into the 16th century. But, at that time, the process was carried on by means of individual acts of violence against which legislation, for a hundred and fifty years, fought in vain. The advance made by the 18th century shows itself in this, that the law itself becomes now the instrument of the theft of the people's land, although the large farmers make use of their little independent methods as well.<sup>1</sup> The parliamentary form of the robbery is that of Acts for enclosures of Commons, in other words, decrees by which the landlords grant themselves the people's land as private property, decrees of expropriation of the people. Sir F. M. Eden refutes his own crafty special pleading, in which he tries to represent communal property as the private property of the great landlords who have taken the place of the feudal lords, when he, himself, demands a "general Act of Parliament for the enclosure of Commons" (admitting thereby that a parliamentary *coup d'état* is necessary for its transformation into private property), and moreover calls on the legislature for the indemnification for the expropriated poor.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The farmers forbid cottagers to keep any living creatures besides themselves and children, under the pretence that if they keep any beasts or poultry, they will steal from the farmers' barns for their support; they also say, keep the cottages poor and you will keep them industrious, &c., but the real fact, I believe, is that the farmers may have the whole right of common to themselves."—(*A Political Inquiry into the consequences of enclosing Waste Lands*, London, 1785, p. 75.)

<sup>2</sup> Eden, l. c., preface.



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Whilst the place of the independent yeoman was taken by tenants at will, small farmers on yearly leases, a servile rabble dependent on the pleasure of the landlords, the systematic robbery of the Communal lands helped especially, next to the theft of the State domains, to swell those large farms, that were called in the 18th century capital farms<sup>1</sup> or merchant farms,<sup>2</sup> and to "set free" the agricultural population as proletarians for manufacturing industry.

The 18th century, however, did not yet recognize as fully as the 19th, the identity between national wealth and the poverty of the people. Hence the most vigorous polemic, in the economic literature of that time, on the "enclosure of commons." From the mass of materials that lie before me, I give a few extracts that will throw a strong light on the circumstances of the time. "In several parishes of Hertfordshire," writes one indignant person, "24 farms, numbering on the average 50-150 acres, have been melted up into three farms."<sup>3</sup> "In Northamptonshire and Leicestershire the enclosure of common lands has taken place on a very large scale, and most of the new

<sup>1</sup> "Capital Farms." *Two Letters on the Flour Trade and the Dearness of Corn.* By a person in business. London, 1767, pp. 19, 20.

<sup>2</sup> "Merchant Farms." *An Inquiry into the present High Prices of Provisions*, London, 1767, p. 11. Note.—This excellent work, that was published anonymously, is by the Rev. Nathaniel Forster.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Wright, *A short address to the public on the monopoly*

lordships, resulting from the enclosure, have been turned into pasturage, in consequence of which many lordships have not now 50 acres ploughed yearly, in which 1,500 were ploughed formerly. The ruins of former dwelling-houses, barns, stables, &c.," are the sole traces of the former inhabitants. "An hundred houses and families have in some open field villages . . . dwindled to eight or ten. . . . The landholders in most parishes that have been enclosed only 15 or 20 years, are very few in comparison of the numbers who occupied them in their open-field state. It is no uncommon thing for 4 or 5 wealthy graziers to engross a large enclosed lordship which was before in the hands of 20 or 30 farmers, and as many smaller tenants and proprietors. All these are hereby thrown out of their livings with their families and many other families who were chiefly employed and supported by them."<sup>1</sup> It was not only the land that lay waste, but often land cultivated either in common or held under a definite rent paid to the community, that was annexed by the neighbouring landlords under pretext of enclosure. "I have here in view enclosures of open fields and lands already improved. It is acknowledged by even the writers in defence of enclosures that these diminished villages increase the monopolies of farms, raise the prices of provisions, and produce

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Addington, *Inquiry into the reasons for or against enclosing open fields*, London, 1772, pp. 37, 43, *passim*.

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depopulation . . . and even the enclosure of waste lands (as now carried on) bears hard on the poor, by depriving them of a part of their subsistence, and only goes towards increasing farms already too large.”<sup>1</sup> “When,” says Dr. Price, “this land gets into the hands of a few great farmers, the consequence must be that the little farmers” (earlier designated by him “a multitude of little proprietors and tenants, who maintain themselves and families by the produce of the ground they occupy by sheep kept on a common, by poultry, hogs, &c., and who therefore have little occasion to purchase any of the means of subsistence”) “will be converted into a body of men who earn their subsistence by working for others, and who will be under a necessity of going to market for all they want. . . . There will, perhaps, be more labour, because there will be more compulsion to it. . . . Towns and manufacturers will increase, because more will be driven to them in quest of places and employment. This is the way in which the engrossing of farms naturally operates. And this is the way in which, for many years, it has been actually operating in this kingdom.”<sup>2</sup> He sums up the effect of the enclosures thus : “Upon the whole, the circumstances

<sup>1</sup> Dr. R. Price, l. c., v. ii., p. 155, Forster, Addington, Kent, Price, and James Anderson, should be read and compared with the miserable prattle of Sycophant MacCulloch in his catalogue, *The Literature of Political Economy*, London, 1845.

<sup>2</sup> Price, l. c., p. 147.

of the lower ranks of men are altered in almost every respect for the worse. From little occupiers of land, they are reduced to the state of day-labourers and hirelings ; and, at the same time, their subsistence in that state has become more difficult.”<sup>1</sup> In fact, usurpation of the common lands and the revolution in agriculture accompanying this, told so acutely on the agricultural labourers that, even according to Eden, between 1765 and 1780, their wages began to fall below the minimum, and to be supplemented by

<sup>1</sup> Price, l. c., p. 159. We are reminded of ancient Rome. “The rich had got possession of the greater part of the undivided land. They trusted in the conditions of the time, that these possessions would not be again taken from them, and bought, therefore, some of the pieces of land lying near theirs, and belonging to the poor, with the acquiescence of their owners, and took some by force, so that they now were cultivating widely extended domains, instead of isolated fields. Then they employed slaves in agriculture and cattle-breeding, because freemen would have been taken from labour for military service. The possession of slaves brought them great gain, inasmuch as these, on account of their immunity from military service, could freely multiply and have a multitude of children. Thus the powerful men drew all wealth to themselves, and all the land swarmed with slaves. The Italians, on the other hand, were always decreasing in number, destroyed as they were by poverty, taxes, and military service. Even when times of peace came, they were doomed to complete inactivity, because the rich were in possession of the soil, and used slaves instead of free men in the tilling of it.”—(Appian, *Civil Wars*, I., 7.) This passage refers to the time before the Licinian rogations. Military service, which hastened to so great an extent the ruin of the Roman plebeians, was also the chief means by which, as in a forcing-house, Charlemagne brought about the transformation of free German peasants into serfs and bondsmen.

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official poor-law relief. Their wages, he says, "were not more than enough for the absolute necessities of life."

Let us hear for a moment a defender of enclosures and an opponent of Dr. Price. "Nor is it a consequence that there must be depopulation, because men are not seen wasting their labour in the open field. . . . If, by converting the little farmers into a body of men who must work for others, more labour is produced, it is an advantage which the nation" (to which, of course, the "converted" ones do not belong) "should wish for . . . the produce being greater when their joint labours are employed on one farm, there will be a surplus for manufactures, and by this means manufactures, one of the mines of the nation, will increase, in proportion to the quantity of corn produced."<sup>1</sup>

The stoical peace of mind with which the political economist regards the most shameless violation of the "sacred rights of property" and the grossest acts of violence to persons, as soon as they are necessary to lay the foundations of the capitalistic mode of production, is shown by Sir F. M. Eden, philanthropist

<sup>1</sup> *An Inquiry into the Connection between the Present Prices of Provisions, &c.*, pp. 124, 129. To the like effect, but with an opposite tendency: "Working-men are driven from their cottages and forced into the towns to seek for employment; but then a larger surplus is obtained, and thus capital is augmented."—(*The Perils of the Nation*, 2nd ed., London, 1843, p. 14.)

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and tory, to boot. The whole series of thefts, outrages, and popular misery, that accompanied the forcible expropriation of the people, from the last third of the 15th to the end of the 18th century, lead him merely to the comfortable conclusion : " The due proportion between arable land and pasture had to be established. During the whole of the 14th and the greater part of the 15th century, there was one acre of pasture to 2, 3, and even 4 of arable land. About the middle of the 16th century the proportion was changed to 2 acres of pasture to 2, later on, of 2 acres of pasture to one of arable, until at last the just proportion of 3 acres of pasture to one of arable land was attained."

In the 19th century, the very memory of the connection between the agricultural labourer and the communal property had, of course, vanished. To say nothing of more recent times, have the agricultural population received a farthing of compensation for the 3,511,770 acres of common land which between 1801 and 1831 were stolen from them and by parliamentary devices presented to the landlords by the landlords ?

The last process of wholesale expropriation of the agricultural population from the soil is, finally, the so-called clearing of estates, *i.e.*, the sweeping men off them. All the English methods hitherto considered culminated in "clearing." As we saw in the picture of modern conditions given in a former chapter, where

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there are no more independent peasants to get rid of, the "clearing" of cottages begins ; so that the agricultural labourers do not find on the soil cultivated by them even the spot necessary for their own housing. But what "clearing of estates" really and properly signifies, we learn only in the promised land of modern romance, the Highlands of Scotland. There the process is distinguished by its systematic character, by the magnitude of the scale on which it is carried out at one blow (in Ireland landlords have gone to the length of sweeping away several villages at once ; in Scotland areas as large as German principalities are dealt with), finally by the peculiar form of property, under which the embezzled lands were held.

The Highland Celts were organized in clans, each of which was the owner of the land on which it was settled. The representative of the clan, its chief or "great man," was only the titular owner of this property, just as the Queen of England is the titular owner of all the national soil. When the English government succeeded in suppressing the intestine wars of these "great men," and their constant incursions into the Lowland plains, the chiefs of the clans by no means gave up their time-honoured trade as robbers ; they only changed its form. On their own authority they transformed their nominal right into a right of private property, and as this brought them into collision with their clansmen, resolved to

drive them out by open force. "A king of England might as well claim to drive his subjects into the sea,"<sup>1</sup> says Professor Newman. This revolution, which began in Scotland after the last rising of the followers of the Pretender, can be followed through its first phases in the writings of Sir James Steuart<sup>2</sup> and James Anderson.<sup>3</sup> In the 18th century the hunted-out Gaels were forbidden to emigrate from the country, with a view to driving them by force to Glasgow and other manufacturing towns.<sup>4</sup> As an example of the method<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> l. c., p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> Steuart says "If you compare the rent of these lands" (he erroneously includes in this economic category the tribute of the taskmen to the clan-chief) "with the extent, it appears very small. If you compare it with the numbers fed upon the farm, you will find that an estate in the Highlands maintains, perhaps, ten times as many people as another of the same value in a good and fertile province" (l. c., vol. i., ch. xvi., p. 104).

<sup>3</sup> James Anderson, *Observations on the means of exciting a spirit of National Industry, &c.*, Edinburgh, 1777.

<sup>4</sup> In 1860 the people expropriated by force were exported to Canada under false pretences. Some fled to the mountains and neighbouring islands. They were followed by the police, came to blows with them and escaped.

<sup>5</sup> "In the Highlands of Scotland," says Buchanan, the commentator on Adam Smith, 1814, "the ancient state of property is daily subverted. . . . The landlord, without regard to the hereditary tenant (a category used in error here), now offers his land to the highest bidder, who, if he is an improver, instantly adopts a new system of cultivation. The land, formerly overspread with small tenants or labourers, was peopled in proportion to its produce, but under the new system of improved cultivation and increased rents, the largest possible produce is obtained at the least possible expense: and the useless hands being, with this view, removed, the popula-



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obtaining in the 19th century, the "clearing" made by the Duchess of Sutherland will suffice here. This person, well instructed in economy, resolved, on entering upon her government, to effect a radical cure, and to turn the whole country, whose population had already been, by earlier processes of the like kind, reduced to 15,000, into a sheep-walk. From 1814 to 1820 these 15,000 inhabitants, about 3,000 families, were systematically hunted and rooted out. All their villages were destroyed and burnt, all their fields turned into pasturage. British soldiers enforced this eviction, and came to blows with the inhabitants. One old woman was burnt to death in the flames of the hut, which she refused to leave. Thus this fine lady appropriated 794,000 acres of land that had from time immemorial belonged to the clan. She assigned to the expelled inhabitants about 6,000 acres on the

tion is reduced, not to what the land will maintain, but to what it will employ. The dispossessed tenants either seek a subsistence in the neighbouring towns," &c.—(David Buchanan, *Observations on, &c., A. Smith's Wealth of Nations*, Edinburgh, 1814, vol. iv., p. 144.) "The Scotch grandes dispossessed families as they would grub up coppice-wood, and they treated villages and their people as Indians harassed with wild beasts do, in their vengeance, a jungle with tigers. . . . Man is bartered for a fleece or a carcass of mutton, nay, held cheaper. . . . Why, how much worse is it than the intention of the Moguls, who, when they had broken into the northern provinces of China, proposed in council to exterminate the inhabitants, and convert the land into pasture. This proposal many Highland proprietors have effected in their own country against their own countrymen."—(George Ensor, *An inquiry concerning the population of nations*, Lond., 1818, pp. 215, 216.)

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sea-shore—2 acres per family. The 6,000 acres had until this time lain waste, and brought in no income to their owners. The Duchess, in the nobility of her heart, actually went so far as to let these at an average rent of 2s. 6d. per acre to the clansmen, who for centuries had shed their blood for her family. The whole of the stolen clan-land she divided into 29 great sheep farms, each inhabited by a single family, for the most part imported English farm-servants. In the year 1835 the 15,000 Gaels were already replaced by 131,000 sheep. The remnant of the aborigines flung on the sea-shore, tried to live by catching fish. They became amphibious and lived, as an English author says, half on land and half on water, and withal only half on both.<sup>1</sup>

But the brave Gaels must expiate yet more bitterly their idolatry, romantic and of the mountains, for the "great men" of the clan. The smell of their fish rose to the noses of the great men. They scented some profit in it, and let the sea-shore to the great fishmongers

<sup>1</sup> When the present Duchess of Sutherland entertained Mrs. Beecher Stowe, authoress of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, with great magnificence in London, to show her sympathy for the negro slaves of the American republic—a sympathy that she prudently forgot, with her fellow-aristocrats, during the civil war, in which every "noble" English heart beat for the slave-owner—I gave in the *New York Tribune* the facts about the Sutherland slaves. (Epitomized in part by Carey in *The Slave Trade*, London, 1853, pp. 202, 203.) My article was reprinted in a Scotch newspaper, and led to a pretty polemic between the latter and the sycophants of the Sutherlands.

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of London. For the second time the Gaels were hunted out.<sup>1</sup>

But, finally, part of the sheep-walks are turned into deer preserves. Every one knows that there are no real forests in England. The deer in the parks of the great are demurely domestic cattle, fat as London aldermen. Scotland is therefore the last refuge of the "noble passion." "In the Highlands," says Somers in 1848, "new forests are springing up like mushroom. Here, on one side of Gaick, you have the new forest of Glenfeshie; and there on the other you have the new forest of Ardverikie. In the same line you have the Black Mount, an immense waste also recently erected. From east to west—from the neighbourhood of Aberdeen to the crags of Oban—you have now a continuous line of forests; while in other parts of the Highlands there are the new forests of Loch Archaig, Glengarry, Glenmoriston, &c. Sheep were introduced into glens which had been the seats of communities of small farmers; and the latter were driven to seek subsistence on coarser and more sterile tracks of soil. Now deer are supplanting sheep; and these are once more dispossessing the small tenants, who will necessarily be driven down upon still coarser

<sup>1</sup> Interesting details on this fish trade will be found in Mr. David Urquhart's *Portfolio*, new series.—Nassau W. Senior, in his posthumous work, already quoted, terms "the proceedings in Sutherlandshire one of the most beneficent clearings since the memory of man" (l. c.).

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land and to more grinding penury. Deer forests<sup>1</sup> and the people cannot co-exist. One or other of the two must yield. Let the forests be increased in number and extent during the next quarter of a century, as they have been in the last, and the Gaels will perish from their native soil. . . . This movement among the Highland proprietors is with some a matter of ambition . . . with some love of sport . . . while others, of a more practical cast, follow the trade in deer with an eye solely to profit. For it is a fact, that a mountain range laid in forest is, in many cases, more profitable to the proprietor than when let as a sheep-walk. . . . The huntsman who wants a deer forest limits his offers by no other calculation than the extent of his purse. . . . Sufferings have been inflicted in the Highlands scarcely less severe than those occasioned by the policy of the Norman kings. Deer have received extended ranges, while men have been hunted within a narrower and still narrower circle. . . . One after one the liberties of the people have been cloven down. . . . And the oppressions are daily on the increase. . . . The clearance and dispersion of the people is pursued by the proprietors as a settled principle, as an agricultural necessity, just as trees and brushwood are

<sup>1</sup> The deer forests of Scotland contain not a single tree. The sheep are driven from, and then the deer driven to, the naked hills, and then it is called a deer forest. Not even timber planting and real forest culture.

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cleared from the wastes of America or Australia ; and the operation goes on in a quiet, business-like way, &c."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Robert Somers, *Letters from the Highlands : or the Famine of 1847*. London, 1848, pp. 12-28, passim. These letters originally appeared in the *Times*. The English economists of course explained the famine of the Gaels in 1847, by their over-population. At all events, they " were pressing on their food-supply." The " clearing of estates," or as it is called in Germany " Bauernlegen," occurred in Germany especially after the 30 years' war, and led to peasant-revolts as late as 1790 in Kursachsen. It obtained especially in East Germany. In most of the Prussian provinces, Frederick II. for the first time secured right of property for the peasants. After the conquest of Silesia he forced the landlords to rebuild the huts, barns, &c., and to provide the peasants with cattle and implements. He wanted soldiers for his army and taxpayers for his treasury. For the rest, the pleasant life that the peasant led under Frederick's system of finance and hodge-podge rule of despotism, bureaucracy and feudalism, may be seen from the following quotation from his admirer, Mirabeau : " Le lin fait donc une des grandes richesses du cultivateur dans le Nord de l'Allemagne. Malheureusement pour l'espèce humaine, ce n'est qu'une ressource contre la misère et non un moyen de bien-être. Les impôts directs, les corvées, les servitudes de tout genre, écrasent le cultivateur allemand, qui paie encore des impôts indirects dans tout ce qu'il achète. . . . et pour comble de ruine, il n'ose pas vendre ses productions où et comme il le veut ; il n'ose pas acheter ce dont il a besoin aux marchands qui pourraient le lui livrer au meilleur prix. Toutes ces causes le ruinent insensiblement, et il se trouverait hors d'état de payer les impôts directs à l'échéance sans la filerie ; elle lui offre une ressource, en occupant utilement sa femme, ses enfants, ses servants, ses valets, et lui-même ; mais quelle pénible vie, même aidée de ce secours ! En été, il travaille comme un forçat au labourage et à la récolte ; il se couche à neuf heures et se lève à deux, pour suffire aux travaux ; en hiver il devrait réparer ses forces par un plus grand repos ; mais il manquera de grains pour le pain et les senailles, s'il se défait des denrées qu'il faudrait vendre pour payer les impôts. Il faut donc

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The spoliation of the church's property, the fraudulent alienation of the State domains, the robbery of the common lands, the usurpation of feudal and clan property, and its transformation into modern private property under circumstances of reckless terrorism,

filer pour suppléer à ce vide. . . . il faut y apporter la plus grande assiduité. Aussi le paysan se couche-t-il en hiver à minuit, une heure, et se lève à cinq ou six ; ou bien il se couche à neuf, et se lève à deux, et cela tous les jours de la vie si ce n'est le dimanche. Ces excès de veille et de travail usent la nature humaine, et de là vient qu'hommes et femmes vieillissent beaucoup plutôt dans les campagnes que dans les villes."—(Mirabeau, l. c., t. III., pp. 212, sqq.)

Note to the second edition. In April 1866, 18 years after the publication of the work of Robert Somers quoted above, Professor Leone Levi gave a lecture before the Society of Arts on the transformation of sheep-walks into deer forest, in which he depicts the advance in the devastation of the Scottish Highlands. He says, with other things : "Depopulation and transformation into sheep-walks were the most convenient means for getting an income without expenditure. . . . A deer forest in place of a sheep-walk was a common change in the Highlands. The landowners turned out the sheep as they once turned out the men from their estates, and welcomed the new tenants—the wild beasts and the feathered birds. . . . One can walk from the Earl of Dalhousie's estates in Forfarshire to John o' Groats, without ever leaving forest land. . . . In many of these woods the fox, the wild cat, the marten, the polecat, the weasel and the Alpine hare are common ; whilst the rabbit, the squirrel and the rat have lately made their way into the country. Immense tracts of land, much of which is described in the statistical account of Scotland as having a pasturage in richness and extent of very superior description, are thus shut out from all cultivation and improvement, and are solely devoted to the sport of a few persons for a very brief period of the year." *The London Economist* of June 2, 1866, says : "Amongst the items of news in a Scotch paper of last week, we read . . . 'One of the finest sheep farms in Sutherland-

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were just so many idyllic methods of primitive accumulation. They conquered the field for capitalistic agriculture, made the soil part and parcel of capital, and created for the town industries the necessary supply of a "free" and outlawed proletariat.

shire, for which a rent of £1,200 a year was recently offered, on the expiry of the existing lease this year, is to be converted into a deer forest.' Here we see the modern instincts of feudalism . . . operating pretty much as they did when the Norman Conqueror . . . destroyed 36 villages to create the New Forest. . . . Two millions of acres . . . totally laid waste, embracing within their area some of the most fertile lands of Scotland. The natural grass of Glen Tilt was among the most nutritive in the county of Perth. The deer forest of Ben Alder was by far the best grazing ground in the wide district of Badenoch ; a part of the Black Mount forest was the best pasture for black-faced sheep in Scotland. Some idea of the ground laid waste for purely sporting purposes in Scotland may be formed from the fact that it embraced an area larger than the whole county of Perth. The resources of the forest of Ben Alder might give some idea of the loss sustained from the forced desolations. The ground would pasture 15,000 sheep, and as it was not more than one-thirtieth part of the old forest ground in Scotland . . . it might, &c. . . . All that forest land is as totally unproductive. . . . It might thus as well have been submerged under the waters of the German Ocean. . . . Such extemporized wildernesses or deserts ought to be put down by the decided interference of the Legislature."

BLOODY LEGISLATION AGAINST THE EX-  
PROPRIATED, FROM THE END OF THE  
15TH CENTURY. FORCING DOWN OF  
WAGES BY ACTS OF PARLIAMENT

THE proletariat created by the breaking up of the bands of feudal retainers and by the forcible expropriation of the people from the soil, this "free" proletariat could not possibly be absorbed by the nascent manufactures as fast as it was thrown upon the world. On the other hand, these men, suddenly dragged from their wonted mode of life, could not as suddenly adapt themselves to the discipline of their new condition. They were turned *en masse* into beggars, robbers, vagabonds, partly from inclination, in most cases from stress of circumstances. Hence at the end of the 15th and during the whole of the 16th century, throughout Western Europe a bloody legislation against vagabondage. The fathers of the present working-class were chastised for their enforced transformation into vagabonds and paupers. Legislation treated them as "voluntary" criminals, and assumed that it depended on their own goodwill to go on



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working under the old conditions that no longer existed.

In England this legislation began under Henry VII.,

Henry VIII., 1530 : Beggars old and unable to work receive a beggar's licence. On the other hand, whipping and imprisonment for sturdy vagabonds. They are to be tied to the cart-tail and whipped until the blood streams from their bodies, then to swear an oath to go back to their birthplace or to where they have lived the last three years and to "put themselves to labour." What grim irony ! In 27 Henry VIII. the former statute is repeated, but strengthened with new clauses. For the second arrest for vagabondage the whipping is to be repeated and half the ear sliced off ; but for the third relapse the offender is to be executed as a hardened criminal and enemy of the common weal.

Edward VI. : A statute of the first year of his reign, 1547, ordains that if any one refuses to work, he shall be condemned as a slave to the person who has denounced him as an idler. The master shall feed his slave on bread and water, weak broth and such refuse meat as he thinks fit. He has the right to force him to do any work, no matter how disgusting, with whip and chains. If the slave is absent a fortnight, he is condemned to slavery for life and is to be branded on forehead or back with the letter S ; if he runs away thrice, he is to be executed as a felon. The

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master can sell him, bequeath him, let him out on hire as a slave, just as any other personal chattel or cattle. If the slaves attempt anything against the masters, they are also to be executed. Justices of the peace, on information, are to hunt the rascals down. If it happens that a vagabond has been idling about for three days, he is to be taken to his birthplace, branded with a red-hot iron with the letter V on the breast and be set to work, in chains, in the streets or at some other labour. If the vagabond gives a false birthplace, he is then to become the slave for life of this place, of its inhabitants, or its corporation, and to be branded with an S. All persons have the right to take away the children of the vagabonds and to keep them as apprentices, the young men until the 24th year, the girls until the 20th. If they run away, they are to become up to this age the slaves of their masters, who can put them in irons, whip them, &c., if they like. Every master may put an iron ring round the neck, arms or legs of his slave, by which to know him more easily and to be more certain of him.<sup>1</sup> The last part of this statute provides, that certain poor people may be employed by a place or by persons, who are willing to give them food and drink and to find them

<sup>1</sup> The author of the *Essay on Trade*, etc., 1770, says, "In the reign of Edward VI. indeed the English seem to have set, in good earnest, about encouraging manufactures and employing the poor. This we learn from a remarkable statute which runs thus: 'That all vagrants shall be branded, &c.' " (l. c., p. 5).

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work. This kind of parish-slaves was kept up in England until far into the 19th century under the name of "roundsmen."

Elizabeth, 1572: Unlicensed beggars above 14 years of age are to be severely flogged and branded on the left ear unless some one will take them into service for two years; in case of a repetition of the offence, if they are over 18, they are to be executed, unless some one will take them into service for two years; but for the third offence they are to be executed without mercy as felons. Similar statutes: 18 Elizabeth, c. 13, and another of 1597.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thomas More says in his *Utopia*: "Therefore that on covetous and unsatiable cormaraunte and very plague of his native contrey maye compasse aboute and inclose many thousand akers of grounde together within one pale or hedge, the husbandmen be thrust owte of their owne, or els either by coneyne and fraude, or by violent oppression they be put besydes it, or by wrongs and iniuries thei be so weried that they be compelled to sell all: by one meanes, therfore, or by other, either by hooke or crooke they muste needes departe awaye, poore, selye, wretched soules, men, women, husbands, wiues, fatherlesse children, widowes, wofull mothers with their yonge babes, and their whole household smal in substance, and muche in numbre, as husbandrye requireth many handes. Awaye thei trudge, I say, owte of their knowen accustomed houses, fyndynge no place to reste in. All their housholde stuffe, which is very little woorth, though it might well abide the sale: yet beeynge sodainly thruste owte, they be constrayned to sell it for a thing of nought. And when they haue wandered abroad till that be spent, what can they then els doe but steale, and then iustly pardy be hanged, or els go about beggyng. And yet then also they be caste in prison as vagaboundes, because they go aboute and worke not: whom no man wyl set a worke though thei neuer so willyngly profre themselues therto." Of these poor fugitives of whom

James I. : Any one wandering about and begging is declared a rogue and a vagabond. Justices of the peace in petty sessions are authorized to have them publicly whipped and for the first offence to imprison them for 6 months, for the second for 2 years. Whilst in prison they are to be whipped as much and as often as the justices of the peace think fit. . . . Incurrigible and dangerous rogues are to be branded with an R on the left shoulder and set to hard labour, and if they are caught begging again, to be executed without mercy. These statutes, legally binding until the beginning of the 18th century, were only repealed by 12 Ann, c. 23.

Similar laws in France, where by the middle of the 17th century a kingdom of vagabonds (truands) was established in Paris. Even at the beginning of Louis XVI.'s reign (Ordinance of July 13th, 1777) every

Thomas More says that they were forced to thieve, "7,200 great and petty thieves were put to death," in the reign of Henry VIII.—(Hollinshed, *Description of England*, Vol. 1., p. 186.) In Elizabeth's time, "rogues were trussed up apace, and that there was not one year commonly wherein three or four hundred were not devoured and eaten up by the gallows."—(Strype's *Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion, and other Various Occurrences in the Church of England during Queen Elizabeth's Happy Reign*. Second ed., 1725, Vol. 2.) According to this same Strype, in Somersetshire, in one year, 40 persons were executed, 35 robbers burnt in the hand, 37 whipped, and 183 discharged as "incurrigible vagabonds." Nevertheless, he is of opinion that this large number of prisoners does not comprise even a fifth of the actual criminals, thanks to the negligence of the justices and the foolish compassion of the people; and the other counties of England were not better off in this respect than Somersetshire, while some were even worse.

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man in good health from 16 to 60 years of age, if without means of subsistence and not practising a trade, is to be sent to the galleys. Of the same nature are the statute of Charles V. for the Netherlands (October, 1537), the first edict of the States and Towns of Holland (March 10, 1614), the "Plakaat" of the United Provinces (June 26, 1649), &c.

Thus were the agricultural people, first forcibly expropriated from the soil, driven from their homes, turned into vagabonds, and then whipped, branded, tortured by laws grotesquely terrible, into the discipline necessary for the wage system.

It is not enough that the conditions of labour are concentrated in a mass, in the shape of capital, at the one pole of society, while at the other are grouped masses of men, who have nothing to sell but their labour-power. Neither is it enough that they are compelled to sell it voluntarily. The advance of capitalist production, develops a working-class, which by education, tradition, habit, looks upon the conditions of that mode of production as self-evident laws of nature. The organization of the capitalist process of production, once fully developed, breaks down all resistance. The constant generation of a relative surplus-population keeps the law of supply and demand of labour, and therefore keeps wages, in a rut that corresponds with the wants of capital. The dull compulsion of economic relations completes

the subjection of the labourer to the capitalist. Direct force, outside economic conditions, is of course still used, but only exceptionally. In the ordinary run of things, the labourer can be left to the "natural laws of production," *i.e.*, to his dependence on capital, a dependence springing from, and guaranteed in perpetuity by, the conditions of production themselves. It is otherwise during the historic genesis of capitalist production. The bourgeoisie, at its rise, wants and uses the power of the state to "regulate" wages, *i.e.*, to force them within the limits suitable for surplus-value making, to lengthen the working-day and to keep the labourer himself in the normal degree of dependence. This is an essential element of the so-called primitive accumulation.

The class of wage-labourers, which arose in the latter half of the 14th century, formed then and in the following century only a very small part of the population, well protected in its position by the independent peasant proprietary in the country and the guild-organization in the town. In country and town master and workmen stood close together socially. The subordination of labour to capital was only formal—*i.e.*, the mode of production itself had as yet no specific capitalistic character. Variable capital preponderated greatly over constant. The demand for wage-labour grew, therefore, rapidly with every accumulation of capital, whilst the supply of wage-

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labour followed but slowly. A large part of the national product, changed later into a fund of capitalist accumulation, then still entered into the consumption fund of the labourer.

Legislation on wage-labour, (from the first, aimed at the exploitation of the labourer and, as it advanced, always equally hostile to him),<sup>1</sup> is started in England by the Statute of Labourers, of Edward III., 1349. The ordinance of 1350 in France, issued in the name of King John, corresponds with it. English and French legislation run parallel and are identical in purport. So far as the labour-statutes aim at compulsory extension of the working-day, I do not return to them, as this point was treated earlier (Chap. X., Section 5).

The Statute of Labourers was passed at the urgent instance of the House of Commons. A Tory says naively : "Formerly the poor demanded such *high* wages as to threaten industry and wealth. Next, their wages are so *low* as to threaten industry and wealth equally and perhaps more, but in another way."<sup>2</sup> A tariff of wages was fixed by law for town and country, for piece-work and day-work. The

<sup>1</sup> "Whenever the legislature attempts to regulate the differences between masters and their workmen, its counsellors are always the masters," says A. Smith. "L'esprit des lois, c'est la propriété," says Linguet.

<sup>2</sup> *Sophisms of Free Trade*. By a Barrister. Lond., 1850, p. 53. He adds maliciously : "We were ready enough to interfere for the employer, can nothing now be done for the employed ?"

agricultural labourers were to hire themselves out by the year, the town ones "in open market." It was forbidden, under pain of imprisonment, to pay higher wages than those fixed by the statute, but the taking of higher wages was more severely punished than the giving them. [So also in Sections 18 and 19 of the Statute of Apprentices of Elizabeth, ten days' imprisonment is decreed for him that pays the higher wages, but twenty-one days for him that receives them.] A statute of 1360 increased the penalties and authorized the masters to extort labour at the legal rate of wages by corporal punishment. All combinations, contracts, oaths, &c., by which masons and carpenters reciprocally bound themselves, were declared null and void. Coalition of the labourers is treated as a heinous crime from the 14th century to 1825, the year of the repeal of the laws against Trades Unions. The spirit of the Statute of Labourers of 1349 and of its offshoots, comes out clearly in the fact, that indeed a maximum of wages is dictated by the State, but on no account a minimum.

In the 16th century, the condition of the labourers had, as we know, become much worse. The money wage rose, but not in proportion to the depreciation of money and the corresponding rise in the prices of commodities. Wages, therefore, in reality fell. Nevertheless, the laws for keeping them down remained in force, together with the car-clipping and



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branding of those "whom no one was willing to take into service." By the Statute of Apprentices, 5 Elizabeth, c. 3, the justices of the peace were empowered to fix certain wages and to modify them according to the time of the year and the price of commodities. James I. extended these regulations of labour also to weavers, spinners, and all possible categories of workers.<sup>1</sup> George II. extended the laws against coalitions of labourers to manufactures. In the manufacturing period *par excellence*, the capitalist mode of production had become sufficiently strong to render legal regulation of wages as impracticable as it was

<sup>1</sup> From a clause of Statute 2 of James I., c. 6, we see that certain clothmakers took upon themselves to dictate, in their capacity of justices of the peace, the official tariff of wages in their own shops. In Germany, especially after the Thirty Years' War, statutes for keeping down wages were general. "The want of servants and labourers was very troublesome to the landed proprietors in the depopulated districts. All villagers were forbidden to let rooms to single men and women; all the latter were to be reported to the authorities and cast into prison if they were unwilling to become servants, even if they were employed at any other work, such as sowing seeds for the peasants at a daily wage, or even buying and selling corn. (Imperial privileges and sanctions for Silesia, I., 25.) For a whole century in the decrees of the small German potentates a bitter cry goes up again and again about the wicked and impertinent rabble that will not reconcile itself to its hard lot, will not be content with the legal wage; the individual landed proprietors are forbidden to pay more than the State had fixed by a tariff. And yet the conditions of service were at times better after the war than 100 years later; the farm servants of Silesia had, in 1652, meat twice a week, whilst even in our century, districts are known where they have it only three times a year. Further, wages after the war were higher than in the following century." (G. Freitag.)

unnecessary ; but the ruling classes were unwilling in case of necessity to be without the weapons of the old arsenal. Still, 8 George II. forbade a higher day's wage than 2s. 7½d. for journeymen tailors in and around London, except in cases of general mourning ; still, 13 George III., c. 68, gave the regulation of the wages of silk-weavers to the justices of the peace ; still, in 1706, it required two judgments of the higher courts to decide, whether the mandates of justices of the peace as to wages held good also for non-agricultural labourers ; still, in 1799, an act of Parliament ordered that the wages of the Scotch miners should continue to be regulated by a statute of Elizabeth and two Scotch acts of 1661 and 1671. How completely in the meantime circumstances had changed, is proved by an occurrence unheard-of before in the English Lower House. In that place, where for more than 400 years laws had been made for the maximum, beyond which wages absolutely must not rise, Whitbread in 1796 proposed a legal minimum wage for agricultural labourers. Pitt opposed this, but confessed that the "condition of the poor was cruel." Finally, in 1813, the laws for the regulation of wages were repealed. They were an absurd anomaly, since the capitalist regulated his factory by his private legislation, and could by the poor-rates make up the wage of the agricultural labourer to the indispensable minimum. The provisions of the

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labour statutes as to contracts between master and workman, as to giving notice and the like, which only allow of a civil action against the contract-breaking master, but on the contrary permit a criminal action against the contract-breaking workman, are to this hour (1873) in full force. The barbarous laws against Trades Unions fell in 1825 before the threatening bearing of the proletariat. Despite this, they fell only in part. Certain beautiful fragments of the old statute vanished only in 1859. Finally, the act of Parliament of June 29, 1871, made a pretence of removing the last traces of this class of legislation by legal recognition of Trades Unions. But an act of Parliament of the same date (an act to amend the criminal law relating to violence, threats, and molestation), re-established, in point of fact, the former state of things in a new shape. By this Parliamentary escamotage the means which the labourers could use in a strike or lock-out were withdrawn from the laws common to all citizens, and placed under exceptional penal legislation, the interpretation of which fell to the masters themselves in their capacity as justices of the peace. Two years earlier, the same House of Commons and the same Mr. Gladstone in the well-known straightforward fashion brought in a bill for the abolition of all exceptional penal legislation against the working-class. But this was never allowed to go beyond the second reading, and the matter was thus

protracted until at last the "great Liberal party," by an alliance with the Tories, found courage to turn against the very proletariat that had carried it into power. Not content with this treachery, the "great Liberal party" allowed the English judges, ever complaisant in the service of the ruling classes, to dig up again the earlier laws against "conspiracy," and to apply them to coalitions of labourers. We see that only against its will and under the pressure of the masses did the English Parliament give up the laws against Strikes and Trades Unions, after it had itself, for 500 years, held, with shameless egoism, the position of a permanent Trades Union of the capitalists against the labourers.

During the very first storms of the revolution, the French bourgeoisie dared to take away from the workers the right of association but just acquired. By a decree of June 14, 1791, they declared all coalition of the workers as "an attempt against liberty and the declaration of the rights of man," punishable by a fine of 500 livres, together with deprivation of the rights of an active citizen for one year.<sup>1</sup> This law

<sup>1</sup> Article I. of this law runs : "L'ancantissement de toute espèce de corporations du même état et profession étant l'une des bases fondamentales de la constitution française, il est défendu de les rétablir de fait sous quelque prétexte et sous quelque forme que ce soit." Article IV. declares, that if "des citoyens attachés aux mêmes professions, arts et métiers prenaient des délibérations, faisaient entre eux des conventions tendantes à refuser de concert ou à n'accorder

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which, by means of State compulsion, confined the struggle between capital and labour within limits comfortable for capital, has outlived revolutions and changes of dynasties. Even the Reign of Terror left it untouched. It was but quite recently struck out of the Penal Code. Nothing is more characteristic than the pretext for this bourgeois coup d'état. "Granting," says Chapelier, the reporter of the Select Committee on this law, "that wages ought to be a little higher than they are, . . . that they ought to be high enough for him that receives them, to be free from that state of absolute dependence due to the want of the necessities of life, and which is almost that of slavery," yet the workers must not be allowed to come to any understanding about their own interests, nor to act in common and thereby lessen their "absolute dependence, which is almost that of slavery"; because, forsooth, in doing this they injure "the freedom of their cidevant masters, the present entrepreneurs," and because a coalition against the despotism of the quondam masters of the corporations is—guess what !—is a restoration of the corporations abolished by the French constitution.<sup>1</sup>

qu'à un prix déterminé le secours de leur industrie ou de leurs travaux, les dites délibérations et conventions . . . seront déclarées inconstitutionnelles, attentatoires à la liberté et à la déclaration des droits de l'homme, &c.": felony, therefore, as in the old labour-statutes.—(*Revolutions de Paris*, Paris, 1791, t. III., p. 523.)

<sup>1</sup> Buchez et Roux, *Histoire Parlementaire*, t. x., p. 195.

## GENESIS OF THE CAPITALIST FARMER

Now that we have considered the forcible creation of a class of outlawed proletarians, the bloody discipline that turned them into wage-labourers, the disgraceful action of the state which employed the police to accelerate the accumulation of capital by increasing the degree of exploitation of labour, the question remains : whence came the capitalists originally ? For the expropriation of the agricultural population creates, directly, none but great landed proprietors. As far, however, as concerns the genesis of the farmer, we can, so to say, put our hand on it, because it is a slow process evolving through many centuries. The serfs, as well as the free small proprietors, held land under very different tenures, and were therefore emancipated under very different economic conditions. In England the first form of the farmer is the bailiff, himself a serf. His position is similar to that of the old Roman *villicus*, only in a more limited sphere of action. During the second half of the 14th century he is replaced by a farmer, whom the landlord provides with seed, cattle and implements. His condition

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is not very different from that of the peasant. Only he exploits more wage-labour. Soon he becomes a métayer, a half-farmer. He advances one part of the agricultural stock, the landlord the other. The two divide the total product in proportions determined by contract. This form quickly disappears in England, to give place to the farmer proper, who makes his own capital breed by employing wage-labourers, and pays a part of the surplus product, in money or in kind, to the landlord as rent. So long, during the 15th century, as the independent peasant and the farm-labourer working for himself as well as for wages, enriched themselves by their own labour, the circumstances of the farmer, and his field of production, were equally mediocre. The agricultural revolution which commenced in the last third of the 15th century, and continued during almost the whole of the 16th (excepting, however, its last decade), enriched him just as speedily as it impoverished the mass of the agricultural people.<sup>1</sup>

The usurpation of the common lands allowed him to augment greatly his stock of cattle, almost without cost, whilst they yielded him a richer supply of manure for the tillage of the soil. To this was added, in the

<sup>1</sup> Harrison in his *Description of England*, says "although peradventure foure pounds of old rent be improved to fortie, toward the end of his term, if he have not six or seven yeares rent lieng by him, fiftie or a hundred pounds, yet will the farmer thinke his gaines verie small."

16th century, a very important element. At that time the contracts for farms ran for a long time, often for 99 years. The progressive fall in the value of the precious metals, and therefore of money, brought the farmers golden fruit. Apart from all the other circumstances discussed above, it lowered wages. A portion of the latter was now added to the profits of the farm. The continuous rise in the price of corn, wool, meat, in a word of all agricultural produce, swelled the money capital of the farmer without any action on his part, whilst the rent he paid (being calculated on the old value of money) diminished in reality.<sup>1</sup> Thus

<sup>1</sup> On the influence of the depreciation of money in the 16th century, on the different classes of society, see *A Compendious or Briefe Examination of Certayne Ordinary complaints of Diverse of our Countrymen in these our days*. By W. S., Gentleman. (London, 1581.) The dialogue form of this work led people for a long time to ascribe it to Shakespeare, and even in 1751, it was published under his name. Its author is William Stafford. In one place the knight reasons as follows :

Knight : " You, my neighbour, the husbandman, you Maister Mercer, and you Goodman Cooper, with other artificers, may save yourselves metely well. For as much as all things are deerer than they were, so much do you arise in the pryce of your wares and occupations that ye sell agayne. But we have nothing to sell where-by we might advance ye price there of, to countervaille these things that we must buy agayne." In another place the knight asks the doctor : " I pray you, what be those sorts that ye meane. And first, of those that ye thinke should have no losse thereby?—Doctor : I mean all those that live by buying and selling, for as they buy deare, they sell thereafter. Knight : What is the next sort that ye say would win by it ? Doctor : Marry, all such as have takings or fearmes in their owne manurance [cultivation] at the old rent, for



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they grew rich at the expense both of their labourers and their landlords. No wonder therefore, that England, at the end of the 16th century, had a class of capitalist farmers, rich, considering the circumstances of the time.<sup>1</sup>

where they pay after the olde rate they sell after the newe—that is, they paye for thaire lande good cheape, and sell all things growing thereof deare. Knight : What sorte is that which, ye sayde should have greater losse hereby, than these men had profit ? Doctor : It is all noblemen, gentlemen, and all other that live either by a stinted rent or stypend, or do not manure [cultivation] the ground, or doe occupy no buying and selling.”

<sup>1</sup> In France, the *régisseur*, steward, collector of dues for the feudal lords during the earlier part of the middle ages, soon became an *homme d'affaires*, who by extortion, cheating, &c., swindled himself into a capitalist. These *régisseurs* themselves were sometimes noblemen. E.g. “C’est li compte que messire Jacques de Thoraine, chevalier chastelain sor Besançon rent ès-seigneur tenant les comptes à Dijon pour monseigneur le duc et comte de Bourgoigne, des rentes appartenant à la dite chastellenie, depuis xxve jour de décembre MCCCCLIX jusqu’ au xxviiiie jour de décembre MCCCCLX.”—(Alexis Monteil, *Histoire des Matériaux manuscrits*, etc., p. 244.) Already it is evident here how in all spheres of social life the lion’s share falls to the middleman. In the economic domain, e.g., financiers, stock-exchange speculators, merchants, shopkeepers skim the cream; in civil matters, the lawyer fleeces his clients; in politics the representative is of more importance than the voters, the minister than the sovereign; in religion God is pushed into the background by the “Mediator,” and the latter again is shoved back by the priests, the inevitable middlemen between the good shepherd and his sheep. In France, as in England, the great feudal territories were divided into innumerable small homesteads, but under conditions incomparably more unfavourable for the people. During the 14th century arose the farms or *terriers*. Their number grew constantly, far beyond 100,000. They paid rents varying from  $\frac{1}{12}$  to  $\frac{1}{5}$  of the product in money or in kind. These farms were fiefs, sub-fiefs, &c.,

## REACTION OF THE AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION ON INDUSTRY. CREATION OF THE HOME MARKET FOR INDUSTRIAL CAPITAL.

THE expropriation and expulsion of the agricultural population, intermittent but renewed again and again, supplied, as we saw, the town industries with a mass of proletarians entirely unconnected with the corporate guilds and unfettered by them ; a fortunate circumstance that makes old A. Anderson (not to be confounded with James Anderson) in his *History of Commerce*, believe in the direct intervention of Providence. We must still pause a moment on this element of primitive accumulation. The thinning-out of the independent, self-supporting peasants not only brought about the crowding together of the industrial pro-

according to the value and extent of the domains, many of them only containing a few acres. But these farmers had rights of jurisdiction in some degree over the dwellers on the soil ; there were four grades. The oppression of the agricultural population under all these petty tyrants will be understood. Monteil says that there were once in France 160,000 judges, where to-day 4,000 tribunals, including justices of the peace, suffice.

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letariat, in the way that Geoffroy Saint Hilaire explained the condensation of cosmical matter at one place, by its rarefaction at another.<sup>1</sup> In spite of the smaller number of its cultivators, the soil brought forth as much or more produce, after as before, because the revolution in the conditions of landed property was accompanied by improved methods of culture, greater co-operation, concentration of the means of production, &c., and because not only were the agricultural wage-labourers put on the strain more intensely,<sup>2</sup> but the field of production on which they worked for themselves, became more and more contracted. With the setting free of a part of the agricultural population, therefore, their former means of nourishment were also set free. They were now transformed into material elements of variable capital. The peasant, expropriated and cast adrift, must buy their value in the form of wages, from his new master, the industrial capitalist. That which holds good of the means of subsistence holds with the raw materials of industry dependent upon home agriculture. They were transformed into an element of constant capital. Suppose, e.g., a part of the Westphalian peasants, who, at the time of Frederic II., all spun flax, forcibly expropriated and hunted from the soil; and the other part that remained, turned into day-labourers of large

<sup>1</sup> In his *Notions de Philosophie Naturelle*, Paris, 1838.

<sup>2</sup> A point that Sir James Steuart emphasizes.

farmers. At the same time arise large establishments for flax-spinning and weaving, in which the men "set free" now work for wages. The flax looks exactly as before. Not a fibre of it is changed, but a new social soul has popped into its body. It forms now a part of the constant capital of the master manufacturer. Formerly divided among a number of small producers, who cultivated it themselves and with their families spun it in retail fashion, it is now concentrated in the hand of one capitalist, who sets others to spin and weave it for him. The extra labour expended in flax-spinning realized itself formerly in extra income to numerous peasant families, or maybe, in Frederic II.'s time, in taxes *pour le roi de Prusse*. It realizes itself now in profit for a few capitalists. The spindles and looms, formerly scattered over the face of the country, are now crowded together in a few great labour-barracks, together with the labourers and the raw material. And spindles, looms, raw material, are now transformed, from means of independent existence for the spinners and weavers, into means for commanding them and sucking out of them unpaid labour.<sup>1</sup> One does not perceive, when looking at the large manufactories and the large farms,

<sup>1</sup> "Je permettrai," says the capitalist, "que vous ayez l'honneur de me servir, à condition que vous me donniez le peu qui vous reste pour la peine que je prends de vous commander."—J.-J. Rousseau, *Discours sur l'Économie Politique*.)

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that they have originated from the throwing into one of many small centres of production, and have been built up by the expropriation of many small independent producers. Nevertheless, the popular intuition was not at fault. In the time of Mirabeau, the lion of the Revolution, the great manufactories were still called manufactures réunies, workshops thrown into one, as we speak of fields thrown into one. Says Mirabeau : " We are only paying attention to the grand manufactories, in which hundreds of men work under a director and which are commonly called *manufactures réunies*. Those where a very large number of labourers work, each separately and on his own account, are hardly considered ; they are placed at an infinite distance from the others. This is a great error, as the latter alone make a really important object of national prosperity. . . . The large workshop (*manufacture réunie*) will enrich prodigiously one or two entrepreneurs, but the labourers will only be journeymen, paid more or less, and will not have any share in the success of the undertaking. In the discrete workshop (*manufacture séparée*), on the contrary, no one will become rich, but many labourers will be comfortable ; the saving and the industrious will be able to amass a little capital, to put by a little for a birth of a child, for an illness, for themselves or their belongings. The number of saving and industrious labourers will increase, because they will see in good conduct,

in activity, a means of essentially bettering their condition, and not of obtaining a small rise of wages that can never be of any importance for the future, and whose sole result is to place men in the position to live a little better, but only from day to day. . . . The large workshops, undertakings of certain private persons who pay labourers from day to day to work for their gain, may be able to put these private individuals at their ease, but they will never be an object worth the attention of governments. Discrete workshops, for the most part combined with cultivation of small holdings, are the only free ones.”<sup>1</sup> The expropriation and eviction of a part of the agricultural population not only set free for industrial capital, the labourers, their means of subsistence, and material for labour ; it also created the home market.

In fact, the events that transformed the small peasants into wage-labourers, and their means of subsistence and of labour into material elements of capital, created, at the same time, a home market for the latter. Formerly, the peasant family produced the means of subsistence and the raw materials, which they themselves, for the most part, consumed. These raw materials and means of subsistence have now become

<sup>1</sup> Mirabeau, l. c., t. III., pp. 20-109, *passim*. That Mirabeau considers the separate workshops more economic and productive than the “combined,” and sees in the latter merely artificial exotics under government cultivation, is explained by the position at that time of a great part of the continental manufactures.

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commodities ; the large farmer sells them, he finds his market in manufactures. Yarn, linen, coarse woollen stuffs—things whose raw materials had been within the reach of every peasant family, had been spun and woven by it for its own use—were now transformed into articles of manufacture, to which the country districts at once served for markets. The many scattered customers, whom stray artisans until now had found in the numerous small producers working on their own account, concentrate themselves now into one great market provided for by industrial capital.<sup>1</sup> Thus, hand in hand with the expropriation of the self-supporting peasants, with their separation from their means of production, goes the destruction of rural domestic industry, the process of separation between manufacture and agriculture. And only the destruction of rural domestic industry can give the internal market of a country that extension and consistence which the capitalist mode of production requires. Still the manufacturing period, properly

<sup>1</sup> "Twenty pounds of wool converted unobtrusively into the yearly clothing of a labourer's family by its own industry in the intervals of other work—this makes no show ; but bring it to market, send it to the factory, thence to the broker, thence to the dealer, and you will have great commercial operations, and nominal capital engaged to the amount of twenty times its value. . . . The working-class is thus emerged to support a wretched factory population, a parasitical shop-keeping class, and a fictitious commercial, monetary, and financial system."—(David Urquhart, l. c., p. 120.)

so-called, does not succeed in carrying out this transformation radically and completely. It will be remembered that manufacture, properly so-called, conquers but partially the domain of national production, and always rests on the handicrafts of the town and the domestic industry of the rural districts as its ultimate basis. If it destroys these in one form, in particular branches, at certain points, it calls them up again elsewhere, because it needs them for the preparation of raw material up to a certain point. It produces, therefore, a new class of small villagers who, while following the cultivation of the soil as an accessory calling, find their chief occupation in industrial labour, the products of which they sell to the manufacturers directly, or through the medium of merchants. This is one, though not the chief, cause of a phenomenon which, at first, puzzles the student of English history. From the last third of the 15th century he finds continually complaints, only interrupted at certain intervals, about the encroachment of capitalist farming in the country districts, and the progressive destruction of the peasantry. On the other hand, he always finds this peasantry turning up again, although in diminished number, and always under worse conditions.<sup>1</sup> The chief reason is : Eng-

<sup>1</sup> Cromwell's time forms an exception. So long as the Republic lasted, the mass of the English people of all grades rose from the degradation into which they had sunk under the Tudors.



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land is at one time chiefly a cultivator of corn, at another chiefly a breeder of cattle, in alternate periods, and with these the extent of peasant cultivation fluctuates. Modern Industry alone, and finally supplies, in machinery, the lasting basis of capitalistic agriculture, expropriates radically the enormous majority of the agricultural population, and completes the separation between agriculture and rural domestic industry, whose roots—spinning and weaving—it tears up.<sup>1</sup> It therefore also, for the first time, conquers for industrial capital the entire home market.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tuckett is aware that the modern woollen industry has sprung, with the introduction of machinery, from manufacture proper and from the destruction of rural and domestic industries. "The plough, the yoke, were 'the invention of gods, and the occupation of heroes'; are the loom, the spindle, the distaff, of less noble parentage? You sever the distaff and the plough, the spindle and the yoke, and you get factories and poorhouses, credit and panics, two hostile nations, agricultural and commercial."—(David Urquhart, l. c., p. 122.) But now comes Carey, and cries out upon England, surely not with unreason, that it is trying to turn every other country into a mere agricultural nation, whose manufacturer is to be England. He pretends that in this way Turkey has been ruined, because "the owners and occupants of land have never been permitted by England to strengthen themselves by the formation of that natural alliance between the plough and the loom, the hammer and the harrow."—(*The Slave Trade*, p. 125.) According to him, Urquhart himself is one of the chief agents in the ruin of Turkey, where he had made free trade propaganda in the English interest. The best of it is that Carey, a great Russophile by the way, wants to prevent the process of separation by that very system of protection which accelerates it.

<sup>2</sup> Philanthropic English economists, like Mill, Rogers, Goldwin Smith, Fawcett, &c., and liberal manufacturers like John Bright &

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THE genesis of the industrial <sup>1</sup> capitalist did not proceed in such a gradual way as that of the farmer. Doubtless many small guild-masters, and yet more independent small artisans, or even wage-labourers, transformed themselves into small capitalists, and (by gradually extending exploitation of wage-labour and corresponding accumulation) into full-blown capitalists. In the infancy of capitalist production, things often happened as in the infancy of mediæval towns, where the question, which of the escaped serfs should be master and which servant, was in great part decided by the earlier or later date of their flight. The snail'space of this method corresponded in no wise with the commercial requirements of the new world-market

Co., ask the English landed proprietors, as God asked Cain after Abel, Where are our thousands of freeholders gone? But where do *you* come from, then? From the destruction of those freeholders. Why don't you ask further, where are the independent weavers, spinners, and artisans gone?

<sup>1</sup> Industrial here in contradistinction to agricultural. In the "categoric" sense the farmer is an industrial capitalist as much as the manufacturer.

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that the great discoveries of the end of the 15th century created. But the middle ages had handed down two distinct forms of capital, which mature in the most different economic social formations, and which, before the era of the capitalist mode of production, are considered as capital *quand même*—usurer's capital and merchant's capital.

“At present, all the wealth of society goes first into the possession of the capitalist . . . he pays the landowner his rent, the labourer his wages, the tax and tithe gatherer their claims, and keeps a large, indeed the largest, and a continually augmenting share, of the annual produce of labour for himself. The capitalist may now be said to be the first owner of all the wealth of the community, though no law has conferred on him the right to this property . . . this change has been effected by the taking of interest on capital . . . and it is not a little curious that all the lawgivers of Europe endeavoured to prevent this by statutes, viz., statutes against usury. . . . The power of the capitalist over all the wealth of the country is a complete change in the right of property, and by what law, or series of laws, was it effected ? ”<sup>1</sup> The author should have remembered that revolutions are not made by laws.

The money capital formed by means of usury and

<sup>1</sup> *The Natural and Artificial Rights of Property Contrasted*, Lond., 1832, pp. 98–99. Author of the anonymous work, *Then Hodgskin*.

commerce was prevented from turning into industrial capital, in the country by the feudal constitution, in the towns by the guild organization.<sup>1</sup> These fetters vanished with the dissolution of feudal society, with the expropriation and partial eviction of the country population. The new manufactures were established at sea-ports, or at inland points beyond the control of the old municipalities and their guilds. Hence in England an embittered struggle of the corporate towns against these new industrial nurseries.

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalized the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation. On their heels treads the commercial war of the European nations, with the globe for a theatre. It begins with the revolt of the Netherlands from Spain, assumes giant dimensions in England's anti-jacobin war, and is still going on in the opium wars against China, &c.

The different momenta of primitive accumulation

<sup>1</sup> Even as late as 1794, the small cloth-makers of Leeds sent a deputation to Parliament, with a petition for a law to forbid any merchant from becoming a manufacturer. (Dr. Aikin, l. c.)

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distribute themselves now, more or less in chronological order, particularly over Spain, Portugal, Holland, France, and England. In England at the end of the 17th century, they arrive at a systematical combination, embracing the colonies, the national debt, the modern mode of taxation, and the protectionist system. These methods depend in part on brute force, e.g., the colonial system. But they all employ the power of the State, the concentrated and organized force of society, to hasten, hothouse fashion, the process of transformation of the feudal mode of production into the capitalist mode, and to shorten the transition. Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power.

Of the Christian colonial system, W. Howitt, a man who makes a speciality of Christianity, says : "The barbarities and desperate outrages of the so-called Christian race, throughout every region of the world, and upon every people they have been able to subdue, are not to be paralleled by those of any other race, however fierce, however untaught, and however reckless of mercy and of shame, in any age of the earth."<sup>1</sup> The history of the colonial administration

<sup>1</sup> William Howitt : *Colonization and Christianity : A Popular History of the Treatment of the Natives by the Europeans in all their Colonies*. London, 1838, p. 9. On the treatment of the slaves there is a good compilation in Charles Comte. *Traité de la Législation*. 3<sup>me</sup> éd., Bruxelles, 1837. This subject one must study in detail,

of Holland—and Holland was the head capitalistic nation of the 17th century—“is one of the most extraordinary relations of treachery, bribery, massacre, and meanness.”<sup>1</sup> Nothing is more characteristic than their system of stealing men, to get slaves for Java. The men stealers were trained for this purpose. The thief, the interpreter, and the seller, were the chief agents in this trade, native princes the chief sellers. The young people stolen, were thrown into the secret dungeons of Celebes, until they were ready for sending to the slave-ships. An official report says : “This one town of Macassar, *e.g.*, is full of secret prisons, one more horrible than the other, crammed with unfortunates, victims of greed and tyranny fettered in chains, forcibly torn from their families.” To secure Malacca, the Dutch corrupted the Portuguese governor. He let them into the town in 1641. They hurried at once to his house and assassinated him, to “abstain” from the payment of £21,875, the price of his treason. Wherever they set foot, devastation and depopulation followed. Banjuwangi, a province of Java, in 1750 numbered over 80,000 inhabitants, in 1811 only 18,000. Sweet commerce !

The English East India Company, as is well known, to see what the bourgeoisie makes of itself and of the labourer, wherever it can, without restraint, model the world after its own image.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Stamford Raffles, late Lieut.-Gov. of that island : *History of Java and its Dependencies*. Lond., 1817.

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obtained, besides the political rule in India, the exclusive monopoly of the tea-trade, as well as of the Chinese trade in general, and of the transport of goods to and from Europe. But the coasting trade of India and between the islands, as well as the internal trade of India, were the monopoly of the higher employés of the company. The monopolies of salt, opium, betel and other commodities, were inexhaustible mines of wealth. The employés themselves fixed the price and plundered at will the unhappy Hindus. The Governor-General took part in this private traffic. His favourites received contracts under conditions whereby they, cleverer than the alchemists, made gold out of nothing. Great fortunes sprang up like mushrooms in a day; primitive accumulation went on without the advance of a shilling. The trial of Warren Hastings swarms with such cases. Here is an instance. A contract for opium was given to a certain Sullivan at the moment of his departure on an official mission to a part of India far removed from the opium district. Sullivan sold his contract to one Binn for £40,000; Binn sold it the same day for £60,000, and the ultimate purchaser who carried out the contract declared that after all he realized an enormous gain. According to one of the lists laid before Parliament, the Company and its employés from 1757 to 1766 got £6,000,000 from the Indians as gifts. Between 1769 and 1770, the English manufactured a famine by buying up all the

rice and refusing to sell it again, except at fabulous prices.<sup>1</sup>

The treatment of the aborigines was, naturally, most frightful in plantation-colonies destined for export trade only, such as the West Indies, and in rich and well-populated countries, such as Mexico and India, that were given over to plunder. But even in the colonies properly so-called, the Christian character of primitive accumulation did not belie itself. Those sober virtuosi of Protestantism, the Puritans of New England, in 1703, by decrees of their assembly set a premium of £40 on every Indian scalp and every captured red-skin : in 1720 a premium of £100 on every scalp ; in 1744, after Massachusetts-Bay had proclaimed a certain tribe as rebels, the following prices : for a male scalp of 12 years and upwards £100 (new currency), for a male prisoner £105, for women and children prisoners £50, for scalps of women and children £50. Some decades later, the colonial system took its revenge on the descendants of the pious pilgrim fathers, who had grown seditious in the meantime. At English instigation and for English pay they were tomahawked by red-skins. The British Parliament proclaimed blood-hounds and

<sup>1</sup> In the year 1866 more than a million Hindus died of hunger in the province of Orissa alone. Nevertheless, the attempt was made to enrich the Indian treasury by the price at which the necessities of life were sold to the starving people.



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scalping as "means that God and Nature had given into its hand."

The colonial system ripened, like a hothouse, trade and navigation. The "societies Monopolia" of Luther were powerful levers for concentration of capital. The colonies secured a market for the budding manufactures, and, through the monopoly of the market, an increased accumulation. The treasures captured outside Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement, and murder, floated back to the mother-country and were there turned into capital. Holland, which first fully developed the colonial system, in 1648 stood already in the acme of its commercial greatness. It was "in almost exclusive possession of the East Indian trade and the commerce between the south-east and north-west of Europe. Its fisheries, marine, manufactures, surpassed those of any other country. The total capital of the Republic was probably more important than that of all the rest of Europe put together." Gülich forgets to add that by 1648, the people of Holland were more overworked, poorer and more brutally oppressed than those of all the rest of Europe put together.

To-day industrial supremacy implies commercial supremacy. In the period of manufacture properly so-called, it is, on the other hand, the commercial supremacy that gives industrial predominance. Hence the preponderant rôle that the colonial system plays

at that time. It was "the strange God" who perched himself on the altar cheek by jowl with the old Gods of Europe, and one fine day with a shove and a kick chucked them all of a heap. It proclaimed surplus-value making as the sole end and aim of humanity.

The system of public credit, *i.e.*, of national debts, whose origin we discover in Genoa and Venice as early as the middle ages, took possession of Europe generally during the manufacturing period. The colonial system with its maritime trade and commercial wars served as a forcing-house for it. Thus it first took root in Holland. National debts, *i.e.*, the alienation of the state—whether despotic, constitutional or republican—marked with its stamp the capitalistic era. The only part of the so-called national wealth that actually enters into the collective possessions of modern peoples is—their national debt.<sup>1</sup> Hence, as a necessary consequence, the modern doctrine that a nation becomes the richer the more deeply it is in debt. Public credit becomes the *credo* of capital. And with the rise of national debt-making, want of faith in the national debt takes the place of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which may not be forgiven.

The public debt becomes one of the most powerful

<sup>1</sup> William Cobbett remarks that in England all public institutions are designated "royal"; as compensation for this, however, there is the "national" debt.

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levers of primitive accumulation. As with the stroke of an enchanter's wand, it endows barren money with the power of breeding and thus turns it into capital, without the necessity of its exposing itself to the troubles and risks inseparable from its employment in industry or even in usury. The state-creditors actually give nothing away, for the sum lent is transformed into public bonds, easily negotiable, which go on functioning in their hands just as so much hard cash would. But further, apart from the class of lazy annuitants thus created, and from the improvised wealth of the financiers, middlemen between the government and the nation—as also apart from the tax-farmers, merchants, private manufacturers, to whom a good part of every national loan renders the service of a capital fallen from heaven—the national debt has given rise to joint-stock companies, to dealings in negotiable effects of all kinds, and to agiotage, in a word to stock-exchange gambling and the modern bankocracy.

At their birth the great banks, decorated with national titles, were only associations of private speculators, who placed themselves by the side of governments, and, thanks to the privileges they received, were in a position to advance money to the state. Hence the accumulation of the national debt has no more infallible measure than the successive rise in the stock of these banks, whose full develop-

ment dates from the founding of the Bank of England in 1694. The Bank of England began with lending its money to the Government at 8%; at the same time it was empowered by Parliament to coin money out of the same capital, by lending it again to the public in the form of bank-notes. It was allowed to use these notes for discounting bills, making advances on commodities, and for buying the precious metals. It was not long ere this credit-money, made by the bank itself, became the coin in which the Bank of England made its loans to the state, and paid, on account of the state, the interest on the public debt. It was not enough that the bank gave with one hand and took back more with the other; it remained, even whilst receiving, the eternal creditor of the nation down to the last shilling advanced. Gradually it became inevitably the receptacle of the metallic hoard of the country, and the centre of gravity of all commercial credit. What effect was produced on their contemporaries by the sudden uprising of this brood of bankocrats, financiers, rentiers, brokers, stock-jobbers, &c., is proved by the writings of that time, e.g., by Bolingbroke's.<sup>1</sup>

With the national debt arose an international credit system, which often conceals one of the sources of

<sup>1</sup> "Si les Tartares inondaient l'Europe aujourd'hui, il faudrait bien des affaires pour leur faire entendre ce que c'est qu'un financier parmi nous."—Montesquieu, *Esprit des lois*, t. iv., p. 33, ed. Londres, 1769.

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primitive accumulation in this or that people. Thus the villanies of the Venetian thieving system formed one of the secret bases of the capital-wealth of Holland to whom Venice in her decadence lent large sums of money. So also was it with Holland and England. By the beginning of the 18th century the Dutch manufactures were far outstripped. Holland had ceased to be the nation preponderant in commerce and industry. One of its main lines of business, therefore, from 1701 to 1776, is the lending out of enormous amounts of capital, especially to its great rival England. The same thing is going on to-day between England and the United States. A great deal of capital, which appears to-day in the United States without any certificate of birth, was yesterday, in England, the capitalized blood of children.

As the national debt finds its support in the public revenue, which must cover the yearly payments for interest, &c., the modern system of taxation was the necessary complement of the system of national loans. The loans enable the government to meet extraordinary expenses, without the tax-payers feeling it immediately, but they necessitate, as a consequence, increased taxes. On the other hand, the raising of taxation caused by the accumulation of debts contracted one after another, compels the government always to have recourse to new loans for new extraordinary expenses. Modern fiscality, whose pivot is

formed by taxes on the most necessary means of subsistence (thereby increasing their price), thus contains within itself the germ of automatic progression. Over-taxation is not an incident, but rather a principle. In Holland, therefore, where this system was first inaugurated, the great patriot, De Witt, has in his "Maxims" extolled it as the best system for making the wage-labourer submissive, frugal, industrious, and overburdened with labour. The destructive influence that it exercises on the condition of the wage-labourer concerns us less however, here, than the forcible expropriation, resulting from it, of peasants, artisans, and in a word, all elements of the lower middle-class. On this there are not two opinions, even among the bourgeois economists. Its expropriating efficacy is still further heightened by the system of protection, which forms one of its integral parts.

The great part that the public debt, and the fiscal system corresponding with it, has played in the capitalization of wealth and the expropriation of the masses, has led many writers, like Cobbett, Doubleday and others, to seek in this, incorrectly, the fundamental cause of the misery of the modern peoples.

The system of protection was an artificial means of manufacturing manufacturers, of expropriating independent labourers, of capitalizing the national means of production and subsistence, of forcibly abbreviating the transition from the mediæval to the

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modern mode of production. The European states tore one another to pieces about the patent of this invention, and, once entered into the service of the surplus-value makers, did not merely lay under contribution in the pursuit of this purpose their own people, indirectly through protective duties, directly through export premiums. They also forcibly rooted out, in their dependent countries, all industry, as, *e.g.*, England did with the Irish woollen manufacture. On the continent of Europe, after Colbert's example, the process was much simplified. The primitive industrial capital, here, came in part directly out of the state treasury. "Why," cries Mirabeau, "why go so far to seek the cause of the manufacturing glory of Saxony before the war? 180,000,000 of debts contracted by the sovereigns!"<sup>1</sup>

Colonial system, public debts, heavy taxes, protection, commercial wars, &c., these children of the true manufacturing period, increase gigantically during the infancy of Modern Industry. The birth of the latter is heralded by a great slaughter of the innocents. Like the royal navy, the factories were recruited by means of the press-gang. Blasé as Sir F. M. Eden is as to the horrors of the expropriation of the agricultural population from the soil, from the last third of the 15th century to his own time; with all the self-satisfaction with which he rejoices in this process,

<sup>1</sup> Mirabeau, l. c., t. vi., p. 101.

“essential” for establishing capitalistic agriculture and “the due proportion between arable and pasture land”—he does not show, however, the same economic insight in respect to the necessity of child-stealing and child-slavery for the transformation of manufacturing exploitation into factory exploitation, and the establishment of the “true relation” between capital and labour-power. He says: “It may, perhaps, be worthy the attention of the public to consider, whether any manufacture, which, in order to be carried on successfully, requires that cottages and workhouses should be ransacked for poor children; that they should be employed by turns during the greater part of the night and robbed of that rest which, though indispensable to all, is most required by the young; and that numbers of both sexes, of different ages and dispositions, should be collected together in such a manner that the contagion of example cannot but lead to profligacy and debauchery; will add to the sum of individual or national felicity?”<sup>1</sup>

“In the counties of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and more particularly in Lancashire,” says Fielden, “the newly-invented machinery was used in large factories built on the sides of streams capable of turning the water-wheel. Thousands of hands were suddenly required in these places, remote from towns; and Lancashire, in particular, being, till then, comparatively

<sup>1</sup> Eden, l. c., Vol. I., Book II., Ch. I., p. 421.



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thinly populated and barren, a population was all that she now wanted. The small and nimble fingers of little children being by very far the most in request, the custom instantly sprang up of procuring *apprentices* from the different parish workhouses of London, Birmingham, and elsewhere. Many, many thousands of these little, hapless creatures were sent down into the north, being from the age of 7 to the age of 13 or 14 years old. The custom was for the master to clothe his apprentices and to feed and lodge them in an "apprentice house" near the factory; overseers were appointed to see to the works, whose interest it was to work the children to the utmost, because their pay was in proportion to the quantity of work that they could exact. Cruelty was, of course, the consequence. . . . In many of the manufacturing districts, but particularly, I am afraid, in the guilty county to which I belong [Lancashire], cruelties the most heart-rending were practised upon the unoffending and friendless creatures who were thus consigned to the charge of master manufacturers; they were harassed to the brink of death by excess of labour . . . were flogged, fettered and tortured in the most exquisite refinement of cruelty; . . . they were in many cases starved to the bone while flogged to their work and . . . even in some instances . . . were driven to commit suicide. . . . The beautiful and romantic valleys of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Lanca-

shire, secluded from the public eye, became the dismal solitudes of torture, and of many a murder. The profits of manufactures were enormous ; but this only whetted the appetite that it should have satisfied, and therefore the manufacturers had recourse to an expedient that seemed to secure to them those profits without any possibility of limit ; they began the practice of what is termed " night-working," that is, having tired one set of hands, by working them throughout the day, they had another set ready to go on working throughout the night ; the day-set getting into the beds that the night-set had just quitted, and in their turn again, the night-set getting into the beds that the day-set quitted in the morning. It is a common tradition in Lancashire, that the beds *never get cold.*"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John Fielden, l. c., pp. 5, 6. On the earlier infamies of the factory system, cf. Dr. Aikin (1795), l. c., p. 219, and Gisborne : *Enquiry into the Duties of Men*, 1795, Vol. II. When the steam-engine transplanted the factories from the country waterfalls to the middle of towns, the " abstemious " surplus-value maker found the child-material ready to his hand, without being forced to seek slaves from the workhouses. When Sir R. Peel, (father of the " minister of plausibility "), brought in his bill for the protection of children, in 1815, Francis Horner, lumen of the Bullion Committee and intimate friend of Ricardo, said in the House of Commons : " It is notorious, that with a bankrupt's effects, a gang, if he might use the word, of these children had been put up to sale, and were advertised publicly as part of the property. A most atrocious instance had been brought before the Court of King's Bench two years before, in which a number of these boys, apprenticed by a parish in London to one manufacturer, had been transferred to

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With the development of capitalist production during the manufacturing period, the public opinion of Europe had lost the last remnant of shame and conscience. The nations bragged cynically of every infamy that served them as a means to capitalistic accumulation. Read, *e.g.*, the naïve *Annals of Commerce* of the worthy A. Anderson. Here it is trumpeted forth as a triumph of English statescraft that at the Peace of Utrecht, England extorted from the Spaniards by the Asiento Treaty the privilege of being allowed to ply the negro-trade, until then only carried on between Africa and the English West Indies, between Africa and Spanish America as well. England thereby acquired the right of supplying Spanish America until 1743 with 4,800 negroes yearly. This threw, at the same time, an official cloak over British smuggling. Liverpool waxed fat on the slave-trade. This was its method of primitive accumulation. And, even to the present day, Liverpool "respectability" is the Pindar of the slave-trade which—compare the work of Aikin [1795] already quoted—"has coincided with that spirit of bold adventure which has character-

another, and had been found by some benevolent persons in a state of absolute famine. Another case more horrible had come to his knowledge while on a [Parliamentary] Committee . . . that not many years ago, an agreement had been made between a London parish and a Lancashire manufacturer, by which it was stipulated, that with every 20 sound children one idiot should be taken."

ized the trade of Liverpool and rapidly carried it to its present state of prosperity ; has occasioned vast employment for shipping and sailors, and greatly augmented the demand for the manufactures of the country " (p. 339). Liverpool employed in the slave trade, in 1730, 15 ships ; in 1751, 53 ; in 1760, 74 ; in 1770, 96 ; and in 1792, 132.

Whilst the cotton industry introduced child-slavery in England, it gave in the United States a stimulus to the transformation of the earlier, more or less patriarchal slavery, into a system of commercial exploitation. In fact, the veiled slavery of the wage-workers in Europe needed, for its pedestal, slavery pure and simple in the new world.<sup>1</sup>

Tantæ molis erat, to establish the " eternal laws of Nature " of the capitalist mode of production, to complete the process of separation between labourers and conditions of labour, to transform, at one pole, the social means of production and subsistence into capital, at the opposite pole, the mass of the population into wage-labourers, into " free labouring poor," that artificial product of modern society.<sup>2</sup> If money,

<sup>1</sup> In 1790, there were in the English West Indies ten slaves for one free man, in the French fourteen for one, in the Dutch twenty-three for one. (Henry Brougham, *An Inquiry into the Colonial Policy of the European Powers*, Edin., 1803, Vol. II., p. 74.)

<sup>2</sup> The phrase, " labouring poor," is found in English legislation from the moment when the class of wage-labourers becomes noticeable. This term is used in opposition, on the one hand, to the " idle poor," beggars, etc., on the other to those labourers, who,

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according to Augier,<sup>1</sup> "comes into the world with a congenital blood-stain on one cheek," capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt.<sup>2</sup>

pigeons not yet plucked, are still possessors of their own means of labour. From the Statute Book it passed into political economy, and was handed down by Culpeper, J. Child, &c., to Adam Smith and Eden. After this, one can judge of the good faith of the " execrable political cant-monger," Edmund Burke, when he called the expression, "labouring poor,"—"execrable political cant." This sycophant who, in the pay of the English oligarchy, played the romantic laudator temporis acti against the French Revolution, just as, in the pay of the North American Colonies, at the beginning of the American troubles, he had played the Liberal against the English oligarchy, was an out-and-out vulgar bourgeois. "The laws of commerce are the laws of Nature, and therefore the laws of God."—(E. Burke, l. c., pp. 31, 32.) No wonder that, true to the laws of God and of Nature, he always sold himself in the best market. A very good portrait of this Edmund Burke, during his liberal time, is to be found in the writings of the Rev. Mr. Tucker. Tucker was a parson and a Tory, but, for the rest, an honourable man and a competent political economist. In face of the infamous cowardice of character that reigns to-day, and believes most devoutly in "the laws of commerce," it is our bounden duty again and again to brand the Burkes, who only differ from their successors in one thing—talent.

<sup>1</sup> Marie Augier, *Du Crédit Public*, Paris, 1842.

<sup>2</sup> "Capital is said by a Quarterly Reviewer to fly turbulence and strife, and to be timid, which is very true; but this is very incompletely stating the question. Capital eschews no profit, or very small profit, just as Nature was formerly said to abhor a vacuum. With adequate profit, capital is very bold. A certain 10 per cent. will ensure its employment anywhere; 20 per cent. certain will produce eagerness; 50 per cent., positive audacity; 100 per cent. will make it ready to trample on all human laws; 300 per cent., and there is not a crime at which it will scruple, nor a risk it will not run, even to the chance of its owner being hanged. If turbulence

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WHAT does the primitive accumulation of capital, *i.e.*, its historical genesis, resolve itself into? In so far as it is not immediate transformation of slaves and serfs into wage-labourers, and therefore a mere change of form, it only means the expropriation of the immediate producers, *i.e.*, the dissolution of private property based on the labour of its owner. Private property, as the antithesis to social, collective property, exists only where the means of labour and the external conditions of labour belong to private individuals. But according as these private individuals are labourers or not labourers, private property has a different character. The numberless shades, that it at first sight presents, correspond to the intermediate stages lying between these two extremes. The private property of the labourer in his means of production is the foundation of petty industry, whether agricultural, manufacturing, or both; petty industry, and strife will bring a profit, it will freely encourage both. Smuggling and the slave-trade have amply proved all that is here stated.”  
—(P. J. Dunning, *l. c.*, p. 35.)

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again, is an essential condition for the development of social production and of the free individuality of the labourer himself. Of course, this petty mode of production exists also under slavery, serfdom, and other states of dependence. But it flourishes, it lets loose its whole energy, it attains its adequate classical form, only where the labourer is the private owner of his own means of labour set in action by himself: the peasant of the land which he cultivates, the artisan of the tool which he handles as a virtuoso. This mode of production presupposes parcelling of the soil, and scattering of the other means of production. As it excludes the concentration of these means of production, so also it excludes co-operation, division of labour within each separate process of production, the control over, and the productive application of the forces of Nature by society, and the free development of the social productive powers. It is compatible only with a system of production, and a society, moving within narrow and more or less primitive bounds. To perpetuate it would be, as Pecqueur rightly says, "to decree universal mediocrity." At a certain stage of development it brings forth the material agencies for its own dissolution. From that moment new forces and new passions spring up in the bosom of society; but the old social organization fetters them and keeps them down. It must be annihilated; it is annihilated. Its annihilation, the transformation of

the individualized and scattered means of production into socially concentrated ones, of the pigmy property of the many into the huge property of the few, the expropriation of the great mass of the people from the soil, from the means of subsistence, and from the means of labour, this fearful and painful expropriation of the mass of the people forms the prelude to the history of capital. It comprises a series of forcible methods, of which we have passed in review only those that have been epoch-making as methods of the primitive accumulation of capital. The expropriation of the immediate producers was accomplished with merciless Vandalism, and under the stimulus of passions the most infamous, the most sordid, the pettiest, the most meanly odious. Self-earned private property, that is based, so to say, on the fusing together of the isolated, independent labouring-individual with the conditions of his labour, is supplanted by capitalistic private property, which rests on exploitation of the nominally free labour of others, *i.e.*, on wages-labour.<sup>1</sup>

As soon as this process of transformation has sufficiently decomposed the old society from top to bottom, as soon as the labourers are turned into proletarians, their means of labour into capital, as soon as the

<sup>1</sup> " Nous sommes dans une condition tout à fait nouvelle de la société . . . nous tendons à séparer toute espèce de propriété d'avec toute espèce de travail."—(Sismondi, *Nouveaux Principes de l'Econ. Polit.*, t. II., p. 434.)



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capitalist mode of production stands on its own feet, then the further socialization of labour and further transformation of the land and other means of production into socially exploited and, therefore, common means of production, as well as the further expropriation of private proprietors, takes a new form. That which is now to be expropriated is no longer the labourer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many labourers. This expropriation is accomplished by the action of the immanent laws of capitalistic production itself, by the centralization of capital. One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralization, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop, on an ever-extending scale, the co-operative form of the labour-process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labour into instruments of labour only usable in common, the economizing of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialized labour, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world-market, and with this, the international character of the capitalistic régime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolize all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation ; but with this too

grows the revolt of the working-class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.

The capitalist mode of appropriation, the result of the capitalist mode of production, produces capitalist private property. This is the first negation of individual private property, as founded on the labour of the proprietor. But capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a law of Nature, its own negation. It is the negation of negation. This does not re-establish private property for the producer, but gives him individual property based on the acquisitions of the capitalist era : *i.e.*, on co-operation and the possession in common of the land and of the means of production.

The transformation of scattered private property, arising from individual labour, into capitalist private property is, naturally, a process, incomparably more protracted, violent, and difficult, than the transforma-

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tion of capitalistic private property, already practically resting on socialized production, into socialized property. In the former case, we had the expropriation of the mass of the people by a few usurpers ; in the latter, we have the expropriation of a few usurpers by the mass of the people.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by their revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable. . . . Of all the classes, that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie to-day, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes perish and disappear in the face of Modern Industry, the proletariat is its special and essential product. . . . The lower middle-classes, the small manufacturers, the shopkeepers, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle-class . . . they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. "Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*," London, 1847, pp. 9, 11.

## COMMODITIES

### SECTION I.—THE TWO FACTORS OF A COMMODITY : USE-VALUE AND VALUE (THE SUBSTANCE OF VALUE AND THE MAGNITUDE OF VALUE)

The second extract comprises the first thirteen pages of Volume I. of *Capital*. These pages state the labour theory of value. We have just read Marx's account of how capitalism arose. Now he is engaged on the minute scientific analysis of what capitalism is. That analysis, he says, must start with an analysis of commodities. For a commodity, something, that is to say, which is bought and sold (but see his scientific definition below), is the basic unit of wealth in all capitalist societies. The question which Marx sets out to answer in this section is this : On what principle are commodities exchanged ? How do we settle, for example, that 3 lbs. of tea will exchange for one handkerchief, or that a doctor's consultation is the equivalent of a visit to the cinema ?

Most people find Marx's answer to this question confusing. But this, I believe, is because they do not see the need to ask the question. We are so used to exchanging (by means of money, but that does not basically affect the issue) thousands of wholly different things for each other that we never pause to wonder how we do it. We never ask how we manage to establish ratios by which given quantities of one thing are exchanged for given quantities of another. But this is a real question, and it has to have an answer if economic thought is to be put upon a scientific basis.

## *The Two Factors of a Commodity*

The fact is that we are only able to do this business of exchanging because it has been possible to find some common property in all commodities, however diverse. That property is, obviously, their value. We exchange 3 lbs. of tea for one handkerchief because 3 lbs. of tea are worth one handkerchief. They have, that is to say, the same value. We give the name value to the property common to all commodities. But this answer only raises another question. What is this thing, value, which is the one thing which is common to all commodities? It is, says Marx, the fact that commodities are the products of human labour. The thing which makes commodities valuable; the thing which makes us unwilling to part with them unless we get other commodities of equal value in exchange, is that we cannot replace them without an expenditure of a given amount of labour.

This is the labour theory of value. You will notice that Marx, after stating it, immediately passes on to answer some of the objections which are commonly raised to it. For example, he deals with the silly objection that, if this is true, then the more time a man takes in making something, the more valuable it will be. His passage on this point is so clear that I need say no more about it here.—E. J. S.

THE wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails, presents itself as “an immense accumulation of commodities,”<sup>1</sup> its unit being a single commodity. Our investigation must therefore begin with the analysis of a commodity.

A commodity is, in the first place, an object outside us, a thing that by its properties satisfies human wants

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, *Zur Kritik der Politischen Oekonomie*, Berlin, 1859, p. 4.

of some sort or another. The nature of such wants, whether, for instance, they spring from the stomach or from fancy, makes no difference.<sup>1</sup> Neither are we here concerned to know how the object satisfies these wants, whether directly as means of subsistence, or indirectly as means of production.

Every useful thing, as iron, paper, &c., may be looked at from the two points of view of quality and quantity. It is an assemblage of many properties, and may therefore be of use in various ways. To discover the various uses of things is the work of history.<sup>2</sup> So also is the establishment of socially-recognised standards of measure for the quantities of these useful objects. The diversity of these measures has its origin partly in the diverse nature of the objects to be measured, partly in convention.

The utility of a thing makes it a use-value.<sup>3</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> "Desire implies want; it is the appetite of the mind, and as natural as hunger to the body. . . . The greatest number (of things) have their value from supplying the wants of the mind."—Nicolas Barbon, *A Discourse on coining the new money lighter, in answer to Mr. Locke's Considerations, &c.*, London, 1696, pp. 2, 3.

<sup>2</sup> "Things have an intrinsick vertue" (this is Barbon's special term for value in use) "which in all places have the same vertue; as the loadstone to attract iron" (l. c., p. 6). The property which the magnet possesses of attracting iron, became of use only after by means of that property the polarity of the magnet had been discovered.

<sup>3</sup> "The natural worth of anything consists in its fitness to supply the necessities, or serve the conveniencies of human life."—(John Locke, *Some considerations on the consequences of the lowering of*

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this utility is not a thing of air. Being limited by the physical properties of the commodity, it has no existence apart from that commodity. A commodity, such as iron, corn, or a diamond, is therefore, so far as it is a material thing, a use-value, something useful. This property of a commodity is independent of the amount of labour required to appropriate its useful qualities. When treating of use-value, we always assume to be dealing with definite quantities, such as dozens of watches, yards of linen, or tons of iron. The use-values of commodities furnish the material for a special study, that of the commercial knowledge of commodities.<sup>1</sup> Use-values become a reality only by use or consumption : they also constitute the substance of all wealth, whatever may be the social form of that wealth. In the form of society we are about to consider, they are, in addition, the material depositories of exchange value.

Exchange value, at first sight, presents itself as a quantitative relation, as the proportion in which values in use of one sort are exchanged for those of another

*interest*, 1691, in Works Edit., Lond., 1777, Vol. II., p. 28.) In English writers of the 17th century we frequently find "worth" in the sense of value in use, and "value" in the sense of exchange value. This is quite in accordance with the spirit of a language that likes to use a Teutonic word for the actual thing, and a Romance word for its reflexion.

<sup>1</sup> In bourgeois societies the economical *fiction* of *juris* prevails that every one, as a buyer, possesses an encyclopædic knowledge of commodities.

sort,<sup>1</sup> a relation constantly changing with time and place. Hence exchange value appears to be something accidental and purely relative, and consequently an intrinsic value, *i.e.*, an exchange value that is inseparably connected with, inherent in, commodities, seems a contradiction in terms.<sup>2</sup> Let us consider the matter a little more closely.

A given commodity, *e.g.*, a quarter of wheat is exchanged for  $x$  blacking,  $y$  silk, or  $z$  gold, &c.—in short, for other commodities in the most different proportions. Instead of one exchange value, the wheat has, therefore, a great many. But since  $x$  blacking,  $y$  silk, or  $z$  gold, &c., each represent the exchange value of one quarter of wheat,  $x$  blacking,  $y$  silk,  $z$  gold, &c., must, as exchange values, be replaceable by each other, or equal to each other. Therefore, first : the valid exchange values of a given commodity express something equal ; secondly, exchange value, generally, is only the mode of expression, the phenomenal form, of something contained in it, yet distinguishable from it.

Let us take two commodities, *e.g.*, corn and iron.

<sup>1</sup> "La valeur consiste dans le rapport d'échange qui se trouve entre telle chose et telle autre, entre telle mesure d'une production, et telle mesure d'une autre."—(Le Trosne, *De l'Intérêt Social*, "Physiocrates," Ed. Daire, Paris, 1845, p. 889.)

<sup>2</sup> "Nothing can have an intrinsic value" (N. Barbon, *l. c.*, p. 6) ; or as Butler says—

"The value of a thing  
Is just as much as it will bring."



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The proportions in which they are exchangeable, whatever those proportions may be, can always be represented by an equation in which a given quantity of corn is equated to some quantity of iron : *e.g.*, 1 quarter corn =  $x$  cwt. iron. What does this equation tell us ? It tells us that in two different things—in 1 quarter of corn and  $x$  cwt. of iron there exists in equal quantities something common to both. The two things must therefore be equal to a third, which in itself is neither the one nor the other. Each of them, so far as it is exchange value, must therefore be reducible to this third.

A simple geometrical illustration will make this clear. In order to calculate and compare the areas of rectilinear figures, we decompose them into triangles. But the area of the triangle itself is expressed by something totally different from its visible figure, namely, by half the product of the base into the altitude. In the same way the exchange values of commodities must be capable of being expressed in terms of something common to them all, of which thing they represent a greater or less quantity.

This common "something" cannot be either a geometrical, a chemical, or any other natural property of commodities. Such properties claim our attention only in so far as they affect the utility of those commodities, make them use-values. But the exchange of commodities is evidently an act characterized by a

total abstraction from use-value. Then one use-value is just as good as another, provided only it be present in sufficient quantity. Or, as old Barbon says, "one sort of wares are as good as another, if the values be equal. There is no difference or distinction in things of equal value. . . . An hundred pounds' worth of lead or iron is of as great value as one hundred pounds' worth of silver or gold."<sup>1</sup> As use-values, commodities are, above all, of different qualities, but as exchange values they are merely different quantities, and consequently do not contain an atom of use-value.

If then we leave out of consideration the use-value of commodities, they have only one common property left, that of being products of labour. But even the product of labour itself has undergone a change in our hands. If we make abstraction from its use-value, we make abstraction at the same time from the material elements and shapes that make the product a use-value; we see in it no longer a table, a house, yarn, or any other useful thing. Its existence as a material thing is put out of sight. Neither can it any longer be regarded as the product of the labour of the joiner, the mason, the spinner, or of any other definite kind of productive labour. Along with the useful qualities of the products themselves, we put out of sight both the useful character of the various kinds of labour embodied in them, and the concrete

<sup>1</sup> N. Barbon, l. c., pp. 53 and 57.

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forms of that labour ; there is nothing left but what is common to them all ; all are reduced to one and the same sort of labour, human labour in the abstract.

Let us now consider the residue of each of these products ; it consists of the same unsubstantial reality in each, a mere congelation of homogeneous human labour, of labour-power expended without regard to the mode of its expenditure. All that these things now tell us is, that human labour-power has been expended in their production, that human labour is embodied in them. When looked at as crystals of this social substance, common to them all, they are—Values.

We have seen that when commodities are exchanged, their exchange value manifests itself as something totally independent of their use-value. But if we abstract from their use-value, there remains their Value as defined above. Therefore, the common substance that manifests itself in the exchange value of commodities, whenever they are exchanged, is their value. The progress of our investigation will show that exchange value is the only form in which the value of commodities can manifest itself or be expressed. For the present, however, we have to consider the nature of value independently of this, its form.

A use-value, or useful article, therefore, has value only because human labour in the abstract has been

embodied or materialized in it. How, then, is the magnitude of this value to be measured? Plainly, by the quantity of the value-creating substance, the labour, contained in the article. The quantity of labour, however, is measured by its duration, and labour-time in its turn finds its standard in weeks, days, and hours.

Some people might think that if the value of a commodity is determined by the quantity of labour spent on it, the more idle and unskilful the labourer, the more valuable would his commodity be, because more time would be required in its production. The labour, however, that forms the substance of value, is homogeneous human labour, expenditure of one uniform labour-power. The total labour-power of society, which is embodied in the sum total of the values of all commodities produced by that society, counts here as one homogeneous mass of human labour-power, composed though it be of innumerable individual units. Each of these units is the same as any other, so far as it has the character of the average labour-power of society, and takes effect as such; that is, so far as it requires for producing a commodity, no more time than is needed on an average, no more than is socially necessary. The labour-time socially necessary is that required to produce an article under the normal conditions of production, and with the average degree of skill and intensity prevalent at

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the time. The introduction of power looms into England probably reduced by one half the labour required to weave a given quantity of yarn into cloth. The hand-loom weavers, as a matter of fact, continued to require the same time as before ; but for all that, the product of one hour of their labour represented after the change only half an hour's social labour, and consequently fell to one-half its former value.

We see then that that which determines the magnitude of the value of any article is the amount of labour socially necessary, or the labour-time socially necessary for its production.<sup>1</sup> Each individual commodity, in this connection, is to be considered as an average sample of its class.<sup>2</sup> Commodities, therefore, in which equal quantities of labour are embodied, or which can be produced in the same time, have the same value. The value of one commodity is to the value of any other, as the labour-time necessary for the production of the one is to that necessary for the production of the other.

<sup>1</sup> "The value of them (the necessaries of life), when they are exchanged the one for another, is regulated by the quantity of labour necessarily required, and commonly taken in producing them."—(*Some Thoughts on the Interest of Money in general, and particularly in the Publick Funds, &c.*, Lond., p. 36.) This remarkable anonymous work, written in the last century, bears no date. It is clear, however, from internal evidence, that it appeared in the reign of George II. about 1739 or 1740.

<sup>2</sup> "Toutes les productions d'un même genre ne forment proprement qu'une masse, dont le prix se détermine en général et sans égard aux circonstances particulières."—(Le Trosne, l. c., p. 893.)

“As values, all commodities are only definite masses of congealed labour-time.”<sup>1</sup>

The value of a commodity would therefore remain constant, if the labour-time required for its production also remained constant. But the latter changes with every variation in the productiveness of labour. This productiveness is determined by various circumstances, amongst others, by the average amount of skill of the workmen, the state of science, and the degree of its practical application, the social organization of production, the extent and capabilities of the means of production, and by physical conditions. For example, the same amount of labour in favourable seasons is embodied in 8 bushels of corn, and in unfavourable, only in four. The same labour extracts from rich mines more metal than from poor mines. Diamonds are of very rare occurrence on the earth's surface, and hence their discovery costs, on an average, a great deal of labour-time. Consequently much labour is represented in a small compass. Jacob doubts whether gold has ever been paid for at its full value. This applies still more to diamonds. According to Eschwege, the total produce of the Brazilian diamond mines for the eighty years, ending in 1823, had not realized the price of one-and-a-half years' average produce of the sugar and coffee plantations of the same country, although the diamonds cost much more labour, and therefore

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx., l. c., p. 6.

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represented more value. With richer mines, the same quantity of labour would embody itself in more diamonds, and their value would fall. If we could succeed at a small expenditure of labour, in converting carbon into diamonds, their value might fall below that of bricks. In general, the greater the productiveness of labour, the less is the labour-time required for the production of an article, the less is the amount of labour crystallized in that article, and the less is its value ; and *vice versâ*, the less the productiveness of labour, the greater is the labour-time required for the production of an article, and the greater is its value. The value of a commodity, therefore, varies directly as the quantity, and inversely as the productiveness, of the labour incorporated in it.

A thing can be a use-value, without having value. This is the case whenever its utility to man is not due to labour. Such as air, virgin soil, natural meadows, &c. A thing can be useful, and the product of human labour, without being a commodity. Whoever directly satisfies his wants with the produce of his own labour, creates, indeed, use-values, but not commodities. In order to produce the latter, he must not only produce use-values, but use-values for others, social use-values. Lastly, nothing can have value, without being an object of utility. If the thing is use-less, so is the labour contained in it ; the labour does not count as labour, and therefore creates no value.

SECTION 2.—THE TWOFOLD CHARACTER OF THE LABOUR  
EMBODIED IN COMMODITIES

At first sight a commodity presented itself to us as a complex of two things—use-value and exchange-value. Later on, we saw also that labour, too, possesses the same two-fold nature ; for, so far as it finds expression in value, it does not possess the same characteristics that belong to it as a creator of use-values. I was the first to point out and to examine critically this twofold nature of the labour contained in commodities. As this point is the pivot on which a clear comprehension of political economy turns, we must go more into detail.

Let us take two commodities such as a coat and 10 yards of linen, and let the former be double the value of the latter, so that, if 10 yards of linen = W, the coat = 2W.

The coat is a use-value that satisfies a particular want. Its existence is the result of a special sort of productive activity, the nature of which is determined by its aim, mode of operation, subject, means, and result. The labour, whose utility is thus represented by the value in use of its product, or which manifests itself by making its product a use-value, we call useful labour. In this connection we consider only its useful effect.



### *Twofold Character of the Labour in Commodities*

As the coat and the linen are two qualitatively different use-values, so also are the two forms of labour that produce them, tailoring and weaving. Were these two objects not qualitatively different, not produced respectively by labour of different quality, they could not stand to each other in the relation of commodities. Coats are not exchanged for coats, one use-value is not exchanged for another of the same kind.

To all the different varieties of values in use there correspond as many different kinds of useful labour, classified according to the order, genus, species, and variety to which they belong in the social division of labour. This division of labour is a necessary condition for the production of commodities, but it does not follow, conversely, that the production of commodities is a necessary condition for the division of labour. In the primitive Indian community there is social division of labour, without production of commodities. Or, to take an example nearer home, in every factory the labour is divided according to a system, but this division is not brought about by the operatives mutually exchanging their individual products. Only such products can become commodities with regard to each other, as result from different kinds of labour, each kind being carried on independently and for the account of private individuals.

To resume, then : In the use-value of each com-

modity there is contained useful labour, *i.e.*, productive activity of a definite kind and exercised with a definite aim. Use-values cannot confront each other as commodities, unless the useful labour embodied in them is qualitatively different in each of them. In a community, the produce of which in general takes the form of commodities, *i.e.*, in a community of commodity producers, this qualitative difference between the useful forms of labour that are carried on independently by individual producers, each on their own account, develops into a complex system, a social division of labour.

Anyhow, whether the coat be worn by the tailor or by his customer, in either case it operates as a use-value. Nor is the relation between the coat and the labour that produced it altered by the circumstance that tailoring may have become a special trade, an independent branch of the social division of labour. Wherever the want of clothing forced them to it, the human race made clothes for thousands of years, without a single man becoming a tailor. But coats and linen, like every other element of material wealth that is not the spontaneous produce of nature, must invariably owe their existence to a special productive activity, exercised with a definite aim, an activity that appropriates particular nature-given materials to particular human wants. So far therefore as labour is a creator of use-value, is useful labour, it is a necessary

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condition, independent of all forms of society, for the existence of the human race ; it is an eternal nature-imposed necessity, without which there can be no material exchanges between man and Nature, and therefore no life.

The use-values, coat, linen, &c., *i.e.*, the bodies of commodities, are combinations of two elements—matter and labour. If we take away the useful labour expended upon them, a material substratum is always left, which is furnished by Nature without the help of man. The latter can work only as Nature does, that is by changing the form of matter.<sup>1</sup> Nay more, in this work of changing the form he is constantly helped by natural forces. We see, then, that labour is not the only source of material wealth, of use-values produced by labour. As William Petty puts it, labour is its father and the earth its mother.

<sup>1</sup> Tutti i fenomeni dell' universo, sieno essi prodotti della mano dell' uomo, ovvero delle universali leggi della fisica, non ci danno idea di attuale creazione, ma unicamente di una modificazione della materia. Accostare e separare sono gli unici elementi che l'ingegno umano ritrova analizzando l'idea della riproduzione ; e tanto è riproduzione di valore (*value in use*, although Verri in this passage of his controversy with the Physiocrats is not himself quite certain of the kind of value he is speaking of) e di ricchezze se la terra l'aria e l'acqua ne' campi si trasmutino in grano, come se colla mano dell' uomo il glutine di un insetto si trasmuti in velluto ovvero alcuni pezzetti di metallo si organizzino a formare una ripetizione." —Pietro Verri, *Meditazioni sulla Economia Politica* [first printed in 1773], in Custodi's edition of the "Italian Economists," *Parte Moderna*, t. xv., p. 22.

*Karl Marx*

Let us now pass from the commodity considered as a use-value to the value of commodities.

By our assumption, the coat is worth twice as much as the linen. But this is a mere quantitative difference, which for the present does not concern us. We bear in mind, however, that if the value of the coat is double that of 10 yds. of linen, 20 yds. of linen must have the same value as one coat. So far as they are values, the coat and the linen are things of a like substance, objective expressions of essentially identical labour. But tailoring and weaving are, qualitatively, different kinds of labour. There are, however, states of society in which one and the same man does tailoring and weaving alternately, in which case these two forms of labour are mere modifications of the labour of the same individual, and not special and fixed functions of different persons ; just as the coat which our tailor makes one day, and the trousers which he makes another day, imply only a variation in the labour of one and the same individual. Moreover, we see at a glance that, in our capitalist society, a given portion of human labour is, in accordance with the varying demand, at one time supplied in the form of tailoring, at another in the form of weaving. This change may possibly not take place without friction, but take place it must.

Productive activity, if we leave out of sight its special form, viz., the useful character of the labour,

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is nothing but the expenditure of human labour-power. Tailoring and weaving, though qualitatively different productive activities, are each a productive expenditure of human brains, nerves, and muscles, and in this sense are human labour. They are but two different modes of expending human labour-power. Of course, this labour-power, which remains the same under all its modifications, must have attained a certain pitch of development before it can be expended in a multiplicity of modes. But the value of a commodity represents human labour in the abstract, the expenditure of human labour in general. And just as in society, a general or a banker plays a great part, but mere man, on the other hand, a very shabby part,<sup>1</sup> so here with mere human labour. It is the expenditure of simple labour-power, *i.e.*, of the labour-power which, on an average, apart from any special development, exists in the organism of every ordinary individual. Simple average labour, it is true, varies in character in different countries and at different times, but in a particular society it is given. Skilled labour counts only as simple labour intensified, or rather, as multiplied simple labour, a given quantity of skilled being considered equal to a greater quantity of simple labour. Experience shows that this reduction is constantly being made. A commodity may be the pro-

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Hegel, *Philosophie des Rechts*, Berlin, 1840, p. 250, § 190.

duct of the most skilled labour, but its value, by equating it to the product of simple unskilled labour, represents a definite quantity of the latter labour alone.<sup>1</sup> The different proportions in which different sorts of labour are reduced to unskilled labour as their standard, are established by a social process that goes on behind the backs of the producers, and, consequently, appear to be fixed by custom. For simplicity's sake we shall henceforth account every kind of labour to be unskilled, simple labour ; by this we do no more than save ourselves the trouble of making the reduction.

Just as, therefore, in viewing the coat and linen as values, we abstract from their different use-values, so it is with the labour represented by those values : we disregard the difference between its useful forms, weaving and tailoring. As the use-values, coat and linen, are combinations of special productive activities with cloth and yarn, while the values, coat and linen, are, on the other hand, mere homogeneous congelations of undifferentiated labour, so the labour embodied in these latter values does not count by virtue of its productive relation to cloth and yarn, but only as being expenditure of human labour-power. Tailoring and weaving are necessary factors in the creation

<sup>1</sup> The reader must note that we are not speaking here of the wages or value that the labourer gets for a given labour time, but of the value of the commodity in which that labour time is materialized. Wages is a category that, as yet, has no existence at the present stage of our investigation.

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of the use-values, coat and linen, precisely because these two kinds of labour are of different qualities ; but only in so far as abstraction is made from their special qualities, only in so far as both possess the same quality of being human labour, do tailoring and weaving form the substance of the values of the same articles.

Coats and linen, however, are not merely values, but values of definite magnitude, and according to our assumption, the coat is worth twice as much as the ten yards of linen. Whence this difference in their values ? It is owing to the fact that the linen contains only half as much labour as the coat, and consequently that in the production of the latter, labour-power must have been expended during twice the time necessary for the production of the former.

While, therefore, with reference to use-value, the labour contained in a commodity counts only qualitatively, with reference to value it counts only quantitatively, and must first be reduced to human labour pure and simple. In the former case, it is a question of *How* and *What*, in the latter of *How much* ? *How long* a time ? Since the magnitude of the value of a commodity represents only the quantity of labour embodied in it, it follows that all commodities, when taken in certain proportions, must be equal in value.

If the productive power of all the different sorts of useful labour required for the production of a coat

remains unchanged, the sum of the values of the coats produced increases with their number. If one coat represents  $x$  days' labour, two coats represent  $2x$  days' labour, and so on. But assume that the duration of the labour necessary for the production of a coat becomes doubled or halved. In the first case, one coat is worth as much as two coats were before ; in the second case, two coats are only worth as much as one was before, although in both cases one coat renders the same service as before, and the useful labour embodied in it remains of the same quality. But the quantity of labour spent on its production has altered.

An increase in the quantity of use-values is an increase of material wealth. With two coats two men can be clothed, with one coat only one man. Nevertheless, an increased quantity of material wealth may correspond to a simultaneous fall in the magnitude of its value. This antagonistic movement has its origin in the twofold character of labour. Productive power has reference, of course, only to labour of some useful concrete form ; the efficacy of any special productive activity during a given time being dependent on its productiveness. Useful labour becomes, therefore, a more or less abundant source of products, in proportion to the rise or fall of its productiveness. On the other hand, no change in this productiveness affects the labour represented by value. Since productive power



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is an attribute of the concrete useful forms of labour, of course it can no longer have any bearing on that labour, so soon as we make abstraction from those concrete useful forms. However then productive power may vary, the same labour, exercised during equal periods of time, always yields equal amounts of value. But it will yield, during equal periods of time, different quantities of values in use; more, if the productive power rise, fewer, if it fall. The same change in productive power, which increases the fruitfulness of labour, and, in consequence, the quantity of use-values produced by that labour, will diminish the total value of this increased quantity of use-values, provided such change shorten the total labour-time necessary for their production; and *vice versa*.

On the one hand all labour is, speaking physiologically, an expenditure of human labour-power, and in its character of identical abstract human labour, it creates and forms the value of commodities. On the other hand, all labour is the expenditure of human labour-power in a special form and with a definite aim, and in this, its character of concrete useful labour, it produces use-values.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In order to prove that labour alone is that all-sufficient and real measure, by which at all times the value of all commodities can be estimated and compared, Adam Smith says, "Equal quantities of labour must at all times and in all places have the same value for the labourer. In his normal state of health, strength, and activity, and

## THE FETISHISM OF COMMODITIES AND THE SECRET THEREOF

After this opening passage, Marx goes on to examine the way in which commodities exchange with each other in great detail. We shall have to omit this passage, however, and include only the summary of this part of the argument. The summary forms the last section of Chapter I, and is called "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof." This is not an easy section of *Capital*. But it is one of the most important and brilliant.

The essential thing that Marx is saying is this. As many people realize, we are all in modern capitalist society dependent on each other. We could not, that is to say, live for a single day except as a result of a form of co-operation in our work. We all (except those who do not have to work because they own a part of the

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with the average degree of skill that he may possess, he must always give up the same portion of his rest, his freedom, and his happiness." —(*Wealth of Nations*, b. I., ch. v.) On the one hand, Adam Smith here (but not everywhere) confuses the determination of value by means of the quantity of labour expended in the production of commodities, with the determination of the values of commodities by means of the value of labour, and seeks in consequence to prove that equal quantities of labour have always the same value. On the other hand, he has a presentiment that labour, so far as it manifests itself in the value of commodities, counts only as expenditure of labour-power, but he treats this expenditure as the mere sacrifice of rest, freedom, and happiness, not as at the same time the normal activity of living beings. But then, he has the modern wage-

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means of production) work for each other. I, for example, can only devote my time to writing books for you, because you devote your time to producing food or clothes or transport facilities or something else for me. You buy my books and I buy your bread, clothes, or whatever your product is. The buying and selling of commodities amounts to, and produces, a form of social co-operation by which the necessary work of the world is shared out between us all, each man specializing on a particular job.

Now this fact is pointed out almost *ad nauseam* by all the economists. But what Marx, and nobody else, points out is that this social co-operation is, in capitalist society or in any society which lives by exchanging commodities, *unconscious*. Nobody, nor any group of people, has arranged that so many people shall work at food producing, so many at clothes producing, so many at writing books, so many at doctoring, so many at providing transport, amusement, &c., &c. The social division of labour has, on the contrary, grown up quite unconsciously. It has grown up by means of the gradually extending purchase and sale of commodities offered on a market. And it is the automatic and uncontrolled play of this market which settles how many people should bake, how many should doctor, how many should

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labourer in his eye. Much more aptly, the anonymous predecessor of Adam Smith, quoted above in Note,<sup>1</sup> p. 6, says "one man has employed himself a week in providing this necessary of life . . . and he that gives him some other in exchange, cannot make a better estimate of what is a proper equivalent, than by computing what cost him just as much labour and time ; which in effect is no more than exchanging one man's labour in one thing for a time certain, for another man's labour in another thing for the same time " (l. c., p. 39). [The English language has the advantage of possessing different words for the two aspects of labour here considered. The labour which creates Use-Value, and counts qualitatively, is *Work*, as distinguished from Labour ; that which creates Value and counts quantitatively, is *Labour* as distinguished from Work.—ED.]

## *John Strachey*

write books, how many should serve as railway workers, &c., &c. Moreover, the market effects this distribution of labour between all the different branches of production in a very rough and ready way. There is nothing to prevent many too many, people, for example, becoming bakers, and this actually does happen from time to time. But then too much bread is baked, its price falls below its value, and the bakers cannot get a living. Some of them are forced out into other occupations.

Marx draws important conclusions from this conception. As he puts it, what is really a relationship between people shows itself in capitalist society as a relationship between things. The relationship is really between the bakers who bake the bread, the tailors who make clothes, the authors who write books ; but these people never come into contact with each other at all. All that comes into contact are their respective products—the bread, the suits of clothes, and the books—which are exchanged on the market one for the other. Thus people are almost unaware that they can only live by co-operating with each other. Moreover, since they do not realize consciously what they are doing, they are quite unable to control the process. This is why, under capitalism, our lives are governed, and often profoundly disturbed, and even destroyed, by what are called “economic laws.” These economic laws are merely expressions of the automatic, unconscious way in which due proportions between the numbers engaged in different occupations are maintained. And they are overriding and inescapable laws so long as social co-operation remains an unconscious thing, carried on by exchanging commodities between independent, unrelated producers. This is a basic reason why, under capitalism, there is no possibility of abolishing those profound economic disturbances which we call crises or slumps. So long as we let the unconscious uncomprehended forces of the market regulate our lives, we must expect them to do so only at the cost of untold waste and suffering for millions of human beings.—E. J. S.

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A COMMODITY appears, at first sight, a very trivial thing, and easily understood. Its analysis shows that it is, in reality, a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties. So far as it is a value in use, there is nothing mysterious about it, whether we consider it from the point of view that by its properties it is capable of satisfying human wants, or from the point that those properties are the product of human labour. It is as clear as noon-day, that man, by his industry, changes the forms of the materials furnished by nature, in such a way as to make them useful to him. The form of wood, for instance, is altered, by making a table out of it. Yet, for all that, the table continues to be that common, every-day thing, wood. But, so soon as it steps forth as a commodity, it is changed into something transcendent. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than "table-turning" ever was.

The mystical character of commodities does not originate, therefore, in their use-value. Just as little does it proceed from the nature of the determining factors of value. For, in the first place, however varied the useful kinds of labour, or productive activities, may be, it is a physiological fact, that they are functions of the human organism, and that each such func-

tion, whatever may be its nature or form, is essentially the expenditure of human brain, nerves, muscles, &c. Secondly, with regard to that which forms the groundwork for the quantitative determination of value, namely, the duration of that expenditure, or the quantity of labour, it is quite clear that there is a palpable difference between its quantity and quality. In all states of society, the labour-time that it costs to produce the means of subsistence, must necessarily be an object of interest to mankind, though not of equal interest in different stages of development.<sup>1</sup> And lastly, from the moment that men in any way work for one another, their labour assumes a social form.

Whence, then, arises the enigmatical character of the product of labour, so soon as it assumes the form of commodities? Clearly from this form itself. The equality of all sorts of human labour is expressed objectively by their products all being equally values; the measure of the expenditure of labour-power by the duration of that expenditure takes the form of the quantity of value of the products of labour; and finally, the mutual relations of the producers, within which the social character of their labour affirms itself, take the form of a social relation between the products.

<sup>1</sup> Among the ancient Germans the unit for measuring land was what could be harvested in a day, and was called Tagwerk, Tagwanne (jurnale, or terra jurnalıs, or diornalis), Mannsmaad, &c. (See G. L. von Maurer, *Einleitung zur Geschichte der Mark, &c.*, Verfassung, München, 1859, pp. 129-59.)

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A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour ; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labour. This is the reason why the products of labour become commodities, social things whose qualities are at the same time perceptible and imperceptible by the senses. In the same way the light from an object is perceived by us not as the subjective excitation of our optic nerve, but as the objective form of something outside the eye itself. But, in the act of seeing, there is at all events an actual passage of light from one thing to another, from the external object to the eye. There is a physical relation between physical things. But it is different with commodities. There, the existence of the things *quâ* commodities, and the value relation between the products of labour which stamps them as commodities, have absolutely no connection with their physical properties and with the material relations arising therefrom. There it is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things. In order, therefore, to find an analogy, we must have recourse to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world. In that world the productions

of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. This I call the Fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities.

This Fetishism of commodities has its origin, as the foregoing analysis has already shown, in the peculiar social character of the labour that produces them.

As a general rule, articles of utility become commodities, only because they are products of the labour of private individuals or groups of individuals who carry on their work independently of each other. The sum total of the labour of all these private individuals forms the aggregate labour of society. Since the producers do not come into social contact with each other until they exchange their products, the specific social character of each producer's labour does not show itself except in the act of exchange. In other words, the labour of the individual asserts itself as a part of the labour of society, only by means of the relations which the act of exchange establishes directly between the products, and indirectly, through them, between the producers. To the latter, therefore, the relations connecting the labour of one individual



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with that of the rest appear, not as direct social relations between individuals at work, but as what they really are, material relations between persons and social relations between things. It is only by being exchanged that the products of labour acquire, as values, one uniform social status, distinct from their varied forms of existence as objects of utility. This division of a product into a useful thing and a value becomes practically important, only when exchange has acquired such an extension that useful articles are produced for the purpose of being exchanged, and their character as values has therefore to be taken into account, beforehand, during production. From this moment the labour of the individual producer acquires socially a twofold character. On the one hand, it must, as a definite useful kind of labour, satisfy a definite social want, and thus hold its place as part and parcel of the collective labour of all, as a branch of a social division of labour that has sprung up spontaneously. On the other hand, it can satisfy the manifold wants of the individual producer himself, only in so far as the mutual exchangeability of all kinds of useful private labour is an established social fact, and therefore the private useful labour of each producer ranks on an equality with that of all others. The equalization of the most different kinds of labour can be the result only of an abstraction from their inequalities, or of reducing them to their common

denominator, viz., expenditure of human labour-power or human labour in the abstract. The twofold social character of the labour of the individual appears to him, when reflected in his brain, only under those forms which are impressed upon that labour in everyday practice by the exchange of products. In this way, the character that his own labour possesses of being socially useful takes the form of the condition, that the product must be not only useful, but useful for others, and the social character that his particular labour has of being the equal of all other particular kinds of labour, takes the form that all the physically different articles that are the products of labour, have one common quality, viz., that of having value.

Hence, when we bring the products of our labour into relation with each other as values, it is not because we see in these articles the material receptacles of homogeneous human labour. Quite the contrary: whenever, by an exchange, we equate as values our different products, by that very act, we also equate, as human labour, the different kinds of labour expended upon them. We are not aware of this, nevertheless we do it.<sup>1</sup> Value, therefore, does not stalk

<sup>1</sup> When, therefore, Galiani says: Value is a relation between persons—"La Ricchezza è una ragione tra due persone,"—he ought to have added: a relation between persons expressed as a relation between things.—(Galiani: "*Della Moneta*," p. 221, V. III. of Custodi's collection of *Scrittori Classici Italiani di Economia Politica. Parte Moderna*, Milano, 1803.)

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about with a label describing what it is. It is value, rather, that converts every product into a social hieroglyphic. Later on, we try to decipher the hieroglyphic, to get behind the secret of our own social products ; for to stamp an object of utility as a value, is just as much a social product as language. The recent scientific discovery, that the products of labour, so far as they are values, are but material expressions of the human labour spent in their production, marks, indeed, an epoch in the history of the development of the human race, but, by no means, dissipates the mist through which the social character of labour appears to us to be an objective character of the products themselves. The fact, that in the particular form of production with which we are dealing, viz., the production of commodities, the specific social character of private labour carried on independently, consists in the equality of every kind of that labour, by virtue of its being human labour, which character, therefore, assumes in the product the form of value—this fact appears to the producers, notwithstanding the discovery above referred to, to be just as real and final, as the fact, that, after the discovery by science of the component gases of air, the atmosphere itself remained unaltered.

What, first of all, practically concerns producers when they make an exchange, is the question, how much of some other product they get for their own :

in what proportions the products are exchangeable : When these proportions have, by custom, attained a certain stability, they appear to result from the nature of the products, so that, for instance, one ton of iron and two ounces of gold appear as naturally to be of equal value as a pound of gold and a pound of iron in spite of their different physical and chemical qualities appear to be of equal weight. The character of having value, when once impressed upon products, obtains fixity only by reason of their acting and reacting upon each other as quantities of value. These quantities vary continually, independently of the will, foresight and action of the producers. To them, their own social action takes the form of the action of objects, which rule the producers instead of being ruled by them. It requires a fully developed production of commodities before, from accumulated experience alone, the scientific conviction springs up, that all the different kinds of private labour, which are carried on independently of each other, and yet as spontaneously developed branches of the social division of labour, are continually being reduced to the quantitative proportions in which society requires them. And why ? Because, in the midst of all the accidental and ever fluctuating exchange-relations between the products, the labour-time socially necessary for their production forcibly asserts itself like an overriding law of nature. The law of gravity thus

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asserts itself when a house falls about our ears.<sup>1</sup> The determination of the magnitude of value by labour-time is therefore a secret, hidden under the apparent fluctuations in the relative values of commodities. Its discovery, while removing all appearance of mere accidentality from the determination of the magnitude of the values of products, yet in no way alters the mode in which that determination takes place.

Man's reflections on the forms of social life, and consequently, also, his scientific analysis of those forms, take a course directly opposite to that of their actual historical development. He begins, *post festum*, with the results of the process of development ready to hand before him. The characters that stamp products as commodities, and whose establishment is a necessary preliminary to the circulation of commodities, have already acquired the stability of natural, self-understood forms of social life, before man seeks to decipher, not their historical character, for in his eyes they are immutable, but their meaning. Consequently it was the analysis of the prices of commodities that alone led to the determination of the magnitude of value, and it was the common expression of all

<sup>1</sup> "What are we to think of a law that asserts itself only by periodical revolutions? It is just nothing but a law of Nature, founded on the want of knowledge of those whose action is the subject of it."—(Friedrich Engels, "Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie," in the *Deutsch-französische Jahrbücher*, edited by Arnold Ruge and Karl Marx, Paris, 1844.)

commodities in money that alone led to the establishment of their characters as values. It is, however, just this ultimate money form of the world of commodities that actually conceals, instead of disclosing, the social character of private labour, and the social relations between the individual producers. When I state that coats or boots stand in a relation to linen, because it is the universal incarnation of abstract human labour, the absurdity of the statement is self-evident. Nevertheless, when the producers of coats and boots compare those articles with linen, or, what is the same thing, with gold or silver, as the universal equivalent, they express the relation between their own private labour and the collective labour of society in the same absurd form.

The categories of bourgeois economy consist of such like forms. They are forms of thought expressing with social validity the conditions and relations of a definite, historically determined mode of production, viz., the production of commodities. The whole mystery of commodities, all the magic and necromancy that surrounds the products of labour as long as they take the form of commodities, vanishes therefore, so soon as we come to other forms of production.

Since Robinson Crusoe's experiences are a favourite theme with political economists,<sup>1</sup> let us take a look

<sup>1</sup> Even Ricardo has his stories à la Robinson. "He makes the primitive hunter and the primitive fisher straightway, as owners of

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at him on his island. Moderate though he be, yet some few wants he has to satisfy, and must therefore do a little useful work of various sorts, such as making tools and furniture, taming goats, fishing and hunting. Of his prayers and the like we take no account, since they are a source of pleasure to him, and he looks upon them as so much recreation. In spite of the variety of his work, he knows that his labour, whatever its form, is but the activity of one and the same Robinson, and consequently, that it consists of nothing but different modes of human labour. Necessity itself compels him to apportion his time accurately between his different kinds of work. Whether one kind occupies a greater space in his general activity than another, depends on the difficulties, greater or less as the case may be, to be overcome in attaining the useful effect aimed at. This our friend Robinson soon learns by experience, and having rescued a watch, ledger, and pen and ink from the wreck, commences, like a true-born Briton, to keep a set of books. His stock-book contains a list of the objects of utility that belong to him, of the operations necessary for their commodities, exchange fish and game in the proportion in which labour-time is incorporated in these exchange values. On this occasion he commits the anachronism of making these men apply to the calculation, so far as their implements have to be taken into account, the annuity tables in current use on the London Exchange in the year 1817. 'The parallelograms of Mr. Owen' appear to be the only form of society, besides the bourgeois form, with which he was acquainted."—(Karl Marx, *Zur Kritik, &c.*, pp. 38, 39.)

production ; and lastly, of the labour time that definite quantities of those objects have, on an average, cost him. All the relations between Robinson and the objects that form this wealth of his own creation, are here so simple and clear as to be intelligible without exertion, even to Mr. Sedley Taylor. And yet those relations contain all that is essential to the determination of value.

Let us now transport ourselves from Robinson's island bathed in light to the European middle ages shrouded in darkness. Here, instead of the independent man, we find every one dependent, serfs and lords, vassals and suzerains, laymen and clergy. Personal dependence here characterizes the social relations of production just as much as it does the other spheres of life organized on the basis of that production. But for the very reason that personal dependence forms the groundwork of society, there is no necessity for labour and its products to assume a fantastic form different from their reality. They take the shape, in the transactions of society, of services in kind and payments in kind. Here the particular and natural form of labour, and not, as in a society based on production of commodities, its general abstract form is the immediate social form of labour. Compulsory labour is just as properly measured by time, as commodity-producing labour ; but every serf knows that what he expends in the service of his lord,



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is a definite quantity of his own personal labour-power. The tithe to be rendered to the priest is more matter of fact than his blessing. No matter, then, what we may think of the parts played by the different classes of people themselves in this society; the social relations between individuals in the performance of their labour, appear at all events as their own mutual personal relations, and are not disguised under the shape of social relations between the products of labour.

For an example of labour in common or directly associated labour, we have no occasion to go back to that spontaneously developed form which we find on the threshold of the history of all civilized races.<sup>1</sup> We have one close at hand in the patriarchal industries of a peasant family, that produces corn, cattle, yarn, linen, and clothing for home use. These different articles are, as regards the family, so many products of its labour, but as between themselves, they are not

<sup>1</sup> "A ridiculous presumption has latterly got abroad that common property in its primitive form is specifically a Slavonian, or even exclusively Russian form. It is the primitive form that we can prove to have existed amongst Romans, Teutons, and Celts, and even to this day we find numerous examples, ruins though they be, in India. A more exhaustive study of Asiatic, and especially of Indian forms of common property, would show how from the different forms of primitive common property, different forms of its dissolution have been developed. Thus, for instance, the various original types of Roman and Teutonic private property are deducible from different forms of Indian common property."—(Karl Marx, *Zur Kritik, &c.*, p. 10.)

commodities. The different kinds of labour, such as tillage, cattle tending, spinning, weaving and making clothes, which result in the various products, are in themselves, and such as they are, direct social functions, because functions of the family, which, just as much as a society based on the production of commodities, possesses a spontaneously developed system of division of labour. The distribution of the work within the family, and the regulation of the labour-time of the several members, depend as well upon differences of age and sex as upon natural conditions varying with the seasons. The labour-power of each individual, by its very nature, operates in this case merely as a definite portion of the whole labour-power of the family, and therefore, the measure of the expenditure of individual labour-power by its duration, appears here by its very nature as a social character of their labour.

Let us now picture to ourselves, by way of change, a community of free individuals, carrying on their work with the means of production in common, in which the labour-power of all the different individuals is consciously applied as the combined labour-power of the community. All the characteristics of Robinson's labour are here repeated, but with this difference, that they are social, instead of individual. Everything produced by him was exclusively the result of his own personal labour, and therefore simply an object of

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use for himself. The total product of our community is a social product. One portion serves as fresh means of production and remains social. But another portion is consumed by the members as means of subsistence. A distribution of this portion amongst them is consequently necessary. The mode of this distribution will vary with the productive organization of the community, and the degree of historical development attained by the producers. We will assume, but merely for the sake of a parallel with the production of commodities, that the share of each individual producer in the means of subsistence is determined by his labour-time. Labour-time would, in that case, play a double part. Its apportionment in accordance with a definite social plan maintains the proper proportion between the different kinds of work to be done and the various wants of the community. On the other hand, it also serves as a measure of the portion of the common labour borne by each individual, and of his share in the part of the total product destined for individual consumption. The social relations of the individual producers, with regard both to their labour and to its products, are in this case perfectly simple and intelligible, and that with regard not only to production but also to distribution.

The religious world is but the reflex of the real world. And for a society based upon the production of commodities, in which the producers in general enter

into social relations with one another by treating their products as commodities and values, whereby they reduce their individual private labour to the standard of homogeneous human labour—for such a society, Christianity with its *cultus* of abstract man, more especially in its bourgeois developments, Protestantism, Deism, &c., is the most fitting form of religion. In the ancient Asiatic and other ancient modes of production, we find that the conversion of products into commodities, and therefore the conversion of men into producers of commodities, holds a subordinate place, which, however, increases in importance as the primitive communities approach nearer and nearer to their dissolution. Trading nations, properly so called, exist in the ancient world only in its interstices, like the gods of Epicurus in the Intermundia, or like Jews in the pores of Polish society. Those ancient social organisms of production are, as compared with bourgeois society, extremely simple and transparent. But they are founded either on the immature development of man individually, who has not yet severed the umbilical cord that unites him with his fellow-men in a primitive tribal community, or upon direct relations of subjection. They can arise and exist only when the development of the productive power of labour has not risen beyond a low stage, and when, therefore, the social relations within the sphere of material life, between man and man,

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and between man and Nature, are correspondingly narrow. This narrowness is reflected in the ancient worship of Nature, and in the other elements of the popular religions. The religious reflex of the real world can, in any case, only then finally vanish, when the practical relations of everyday life offer to man none but perfectly intelligible and reasonable relations with regard to his fellow-men and to nature.

The life-process of society, which is based on the process of material production, does not strip off its mystical veil until it is treated as production by freely associated men, and is consciously regulated by them in accordance with a settled plan. This, however, demands for society a certain material groundwork or set of conditions of existence which in their turn are the spontaneous product of a long and painful process of development.

Political economy has indeed analysed, however incompletely,<sup>1</sup> value and its magnitude, and has dis-

<sup>1</sup> The insufficiency of Ricardo's analysis of the magnitude of value, and his analysis is by far the best, will appear from the 3rd and 4th books of his work. As regards value in general, it is the weak point of the classical school of political economy that it nowhere, expressly and with full consciousness, distinguishes between labour, as it appears in the value of a product and the same labour, as it appears in the use-value of that product. Of course the distinction is practically made, since this school treats labour, at one time under its quantitative aspect, at another under its qualitative aspect. But it has not the least idea, that when the difference between various kinds of labour is treated as purely quantitative, their qualitative unity or equality, and therefore their reduction to

covered what lies beneath these forms. But it has never once asked the question why labour is represented by the value of its product and labour-time by the magnitude of that value.<sup>1</sup> These formulæ, which

abstract human labour, is implied. For instance, Ricardo declares that he agrees with Destutt de Tracy in this proposition: "As it is certain that our physical and moral faculties are alone our original riches, the employment of those faculties, labour of some kind, is our only original treasure, and it is always from this employment that all those things are created, which we call riches. . . . It is certain, too, that all those things only represent the labour which has created them, and if they have a value, or even two distinct values, they can only derive them from that (the value) of the labour from which they emanate."—(Ricardo, *The Principles of Pol. Econ.*, 3 Ed., Lond., 1821, p. 334.) We would here only point out, that Ricardo puts his own more profound interpretation upon the words of Destutt. What the latter really says is, that on the one hand all things which constitute wealth represent the labour that creates them, but that on the other hand, they acquire their "two different values" (use-value and exchange-value) from "the value of labour." He thus falls into the commonplace error of the vulgar economists, who assume the value of one commodity (in this case labour) in order to determine the values of the rest. But Ricardo reads him as if he had said, that labour (not the value of labour) is embodied both in use-value and exchange-value. Nevertheless, Ricardo himself pays so little attention to the twofold character of the labour which has a twofold embodiment, that he devotes the whole of his chapter on "Value and Riches, Their Distinctive Properties," to a laborious examination of the trivialities of a J. B. Say. And at the finish he is quite astonished to find that Destutt on the one hand agrees with him as to labour being the source of value, and on the other hand with J. B. Say as to the notion of value.

<sup>1</sup> It is one of the chief failings of classical economy that it has never succeeded, by means of its analysis of commodities, and, in particular, of their value, in discovering that form under which value becomes exchange-value. Even Adam Smith and Ricardo,

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bear stamped upon them in unmistakable letters, that they belong to a state of society, in which the process of production has the mastery over man, instead of being controlled by him, such formulæ appear to the bourgeois intellect to be as much a self-

the best representatives of the school, treat the form of value as a thing of no importance, as having no connection with the inherent nature of commodities. The reason for this is not solely because their attention is entirely absorbed in the analysis of the magnitude of value. It lies deeper. The value form of the product of labour is not only the most abstract, but is also the most universal form, taken by the product in bourgeois production, and stamps that production as a particular species of social production, and thereby gives it its special historical character. If then we treat this mode of production as one eternally fixed by nature for every state of society, we necessarily overlook that which is the *differentia specifica* of the value-form, and consequently of the commodity-form, and of its further developments, money-form, capital-form, &c. We consequently find that economists, who are thoroughly agreed as to labour-time being the measure of the magnitude of value, have the most strange and contradictory ideas of money, the perfected form of the general equivalent. This is seen in a striking manner when they treat of banking, where the commonplace definitions of money will no longer hold water. This led to the rise of a restored mercantile system (Canilh, &c.), which sees in value nothing but a social form, or rather the unsubstantial ghost of that form. Once for all I may here state, that by classical political economy, I understand that economy which, since the time of W. Petty, has investigated the real relations of production in bourgeois society, in contradistinction to vulgar economy, which deals with appearances only, ruminates without ceasing on the materials long since provided by scientific economy, and there seeks plausible explanations of the most obtrusive phenomena, for bourgeois daily use, but for the rest, confines itself to systematizing in a pedantic way, and proclaiming for everlasting truths, the trite ideas held by the self-complacent bourgeoisie with regard to their own world, to them the best of all possible worlds.

evident necessity imposed by nature as productive labour itself. Hence forms of social production that preceded the bourgeois form, are treated by the bourgeoisie in much the same way as the Fathers of the Church treated pre-Christian religions.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Les économistes ont une singulière manière de procéder. Il n'y a pour eux que deux sortes d'institutions, celles de l'art et celles de la nature. Les institutions de la féodalité sont des institutions artificielles, celles de la bourgeoisie sont des institutions naturelles. Ils ressemblent en ceci aux théologiens, qui eux aussi établissent deux sortes de religions. Toute religion qui n'est pas la leur est une invention des hommes, tandis que leur propre religion est une émanation de Dieu. — Ainsi il y a eu de l'histoire, mais il n'y en a plus." — (Karl Marx, *Misère de la Philosophie : Réponse à la Philosophie de la Misère par M. Proudhon*, 1847, p. 113.) Truly comical is M. Bastiat, who imagines that the ancient Greeks and Romans lived by plunder alone. But when people plunder for centuries, there must always be something at hand for them to seize ; the objects of plunder must be continually reproduced. It would thus appear that even Greeks and Romans had some process of production, consequently, an economy, which just as much constituted the material basis of their world, as bourgeois economy constitutes that of our modern world. Or perhaps Bastiat means, that a mode of production based on slavery is based on a system of plunder. In that case he treads on dangerous ground. If a giant thinker like Aristotle erred in his appreciation of slave labour, why should a dwarf economist like Bastiat be right in his appreciation of wage-labour ?—I seize this opportunity of shortly answering an objection taken by a German paper in America, to my work, *Zur Kritik der Pol. Oekonomie*, 1859. In the estimation of that paper, my view that each special mode of production and the social relations corresponding to it, in short, that the economic structure of society, is the real basis on which the juridical and political superstructure is raised, and to which definite social forms of thought correspond ; that the mode of production determines the character of the social, political, and intellectual life generally, all this is very true for our own times, in



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To what extent some economists are misled by the Fetishism inherent in commodities, or by the objective appearance of the social characteristics of labour, is shown, amongst other ways, by the dull and tedious quarrel over the part played by Nature in the formation of exchange value. Since exchange value is a definite social manner of expressing the amount of labour bestowed upon an object, Nature has no more to do with it, than it has in fixing the course of exchange.

The mode of production in which the product takes the form of a commodity, or is produced directly for exchange, is the most general and most embryonic form of bourgeois production. It therefore makes its appearance at an early date in history, though not in the same predominating and characteristic manner as nowadays. Hence its Fetish character is comparatively easy to be seen through. But when we come

which material interests preponderate, but not for the middle ages, in which Catholicism, nor for Athens and Rome, where politics, reigned supreme. In the first place it strikes one as an odd thing for any one to suppose that these well-worn phrases about the middle ages and the ancient world are unknown to any one else. This much, however, is clear, that the middle ages could not live on Catholicism, nor the ancient world on politics. On the contrary, it is the mode in which they gained a livelihood that explains why here politics, and there Catholicism, played the chief part. For the rest, it requires but a slight acquaintance with the history of the Roman republic, for example, to be aware that its secret history, is the history of its landed property. On the other hand, Don Quixote long ago paid the penalty for wrongly imagining that knight errantry was compatible with all economical forms of society.

to more concrete forms, even this appearance of simplicity vanishes. Whence arose the illusions of the monetary system? To it gold and silver, when serving as money, did not represent a social relation between producers, but were natural objects with strange social properties. And modern economy, which looks down with such disdain on the monetary system, does not its superstition come out as clear as noonday, whenever it treats of capital? How long is it since economy discarded the physiocratic illusion, that rents grow out of the soil and not out of society?

But not to anticipate, we will content ourselves with yet another example relating to the commodity form. Could commodities themselves speak, they would say: Our use-value may be a thing that interests men. It is no part of us as objects. What, however, does belong to us as objects, is our value. Our natural intercourse as commodities proves it. In the eyes of each other we are nothing but exchange values. Now listen how those commodities speak through the mouth of the economist. "Value" (*i.e.*, exchange value) "is a property of things, riches" (*i.e.*, use-value) "of man. Value, in this sense, necessarily implies exchanges, riches do not."<sup>1</sup> "Riches" (use-value) "are the attribute of men, value is the attribute of commodities. A man or a

<sup>1</sup> *Observations on certain verbal disputes in Pol. Econ., particularly relating to value and to demand and supply*, Lond., 1821, p. 16.

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community is rich, a pearl or a diamond is valuable. . . . A pearl or a diamond is valuable " as a pearl or diamond.<sup>1</sup> So far no chemist has ever discovered exchange value either in a pearl or a diamond. The economical discoverers of this chemical element, who by-the-bye lay special claim to critical acumen, find however that the use-value of objects belongs to them independently of their material properties, while their value, on the other hand, forms a part of them as objects. What confirms them in this view, is the peculiar circumstance that the use-value of objects is realized without exchange, by means of a direct relation between the objects and man, while, on the other hand, their value is realized only by exchange, that is, by means of a social process. Who fails here to call to mind our good friend, Dogberry, who informs neighbour Seacoal, that, "To be a well-favoured man is the gift of fortune ; but reading and writing comes by nature." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S. Bailey, l. c., p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> The author of *Observations* and S. Bailey accuse Ricardo of converting exchange value from something relative into something absolute. The opposite is the fact. He has explained the apparent relation between objects, such as diamonds and pearls, in which relation they appear as exchange values, and disclosed the true relation hidden behind the appearances, namely, their relation to each other as mere expressions of human labour. If the followers of Ricardo answer Bailey somewhat rudely, and by no means convincingly, the reason is to be sought in this, that they were unable to find in Ricardo's own works any key to the hidden relations existing between value and its form, exchange value.

## THE GENERAL FORMULA FOR CAPITAL

The above extracts are all of Part I. which I have space to give. The rest of the part consists of a detailed analysis of the nature of money. Marx explains what money is and details its various functions. He demonstrates that money is originally and essentially a method for making the fundamental process of exchanging commodities infinitely easier and, therefore, infinitely more widespread. But he shows that the intervention of money also makes the process of exchanging much more unstable, much more subject to disturbance. He shows in detail how money makes it possible for the mechanism of exchange, as described above, to get hopelessly out of order and produce the devastating crises (such as the one which began in 1929—the after-effects of which we are still experiencing in 1937).

So far Marx has been analysing a society based on the exchange of commodities. Capitalism, however, is one highly specialized kind of commodity exchanging society. As he showed in detail in his chapters on Primitive Accumulation a specifically capitalist society is one in which the means of production have been gathered up, out of the hands of the population at large and placed in the hands of a small class ; it is a society in which the means of production have become capital in the hands of a class of capitalists. But how does this process occur ? The chapters on Primitive Accumulation show how the thing happened historically. Part. II of *Capital*, which is called “The Transformation of Money into Capital,” analyses the economic aspects of the process. Below I give the whole of this part, which is quite brief.

## *The General Formula for Capital*

There are, Marx says, two ways in which commodities circulate. In a non-capitalist, commodity exchanging, society a man first produces a commodity, and then, if he does not want to use it himself, exchanges it for money. Finally, with this money he buys another commodity which he does want to use. Thus a peasant who has more corn than he wants sells that corn for money and buys some wine with it. You can express this kind of commodity circulation by the shorthand formula  $C-M-C$  : Commodity—Money—Commodity. In this kind of trading people sell things which they do not want in order to buy things which they do want.

But, says Marx, there appears at a certain stage in the development of such commodity producing, pre-capitalist societies a new kind of commodity circulation, or trading. There appear people who have got money, or capital (where this money has come from we shall find out in a moment). These people buy commodities with their money, but they do not do this because they want the commodities for themselves ; they do so in order to sell them again for more money. This kind of specifically capitalist trading is represented by the shorthand formula  $M-C-M$  : Money—Commodities—Money. This, if you think of it, is just the kind of trading always undertaken by a capitalist. He has, say, £10,000 of money, or capital. He lays this out in buying £5,000 worth of some raw material (let us say cloth), £3,000 worth of tailoring labour, and £2,000 worth for the hire of workshops, sewing machines, thread, &c., &c., &c. Then he has the cloth made up into suits and sells the suits again for, he trusts and believes, *more than* £10,000. He has bought the commodities only with the intention of selling them again. This is buying in order to sell. This, says Marx, is a quite new and distinct form of the circulation of commodities ; it is something quite different from the older process of selling in order to buy.

In particular, this new, capitalist, form of trading is pointless unless the capitalist trader manages to get more money at the

## John Strachey

end of the process than he starts out with. No one is going to buy commodities for the mere pleasure of selling them again for the same sum as before. *The whole point of the business is to make a profit.* To return to our example, the tailoring capitalist will not dream of buying the £10,000 worth of commodities unless he is going to be able to sell the finished suits for more than £10,000. And, as we know, he habitually is able to sell the suits for more than £10,000. For if he could not the contemporary capitalist tailoring trade would soon come to an end.

But, asks Marx, where on earth does the extra money come from? Marx calls this extra money *surplus value*. It comes, says Marx, from the fact that the capitalist finds in the market a very peculiar kind of commodity called labour-power. This is the ability of workers to work. To put it in more familiar language, the capitalist finds men and women who are only too glad to come and work for him if he will pay them a wage which will satisfy their basic wants. And these men and women can produce during the time that they work for him much more than their basic wants. But if they can produce much more than their basic wants, why don't they work for themselves instead of the capitalist? We already know the answer to this question. It is contained in the chapter on Primitive Accumulation given above. They do not, and cannot, work for themselves because they lack possession of, or access to, those essential means of production, without which they cannot work. In a capitalist society there are millions of people who cannot get at the land, the factories, or the mines to produce for themselves. So they can produce nothing, except by going and working for the capitalist owners of these means of production.

The reader should note the brilliant ending of this chapter. Marx promises that he will now leave the consideration of the sphere of the exchange of commodities, which has been the main concern of economists hitherto, and will describe how capital itself is produced. For in one sense, at any rate, capital is not

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produced in the market, but in the actual places of production, in the actual process of spinning cotton, hewing coal, or growing wheat.—E. J. S.

THE circulation of commodities is the starting-point of capital. The production of commodities, their circulation, and that more developed form of their circulation called commerce, these form the historical groundwork from which it rises. The modern history of capital dates from the creation in the 16th century of a world-embracing commerce and a world-embracing market.

If we abstract from the material substance of the circulation of commodities, that is, from the exchange of the various use-values, and consider only the economic forms produced by this process of circulation, we find its final result to be money : this final product of the circulation of commodities is the first form in which capital appears.

As a matter of history, capital, as opposed to landed property, invariably takes the form at first of money ; it appears as moneyed wealth, as the capital of the merchant and of the usurer.<sup>1</sup> But we have no need to refer to the origin of capital in order to discover

<sup>1</sup> The contrast between the power, based on the personal relations of dominion and servitude, that is conferred by landed property, and the impersonal power that is given by money, is well expressed by the two French proverbs, "Nulle terre sans seigneur," and "L'argent n'a pas de maître."

that the first form of appearance of capital is money. We can see it daily under our very eyes. All new capital, to commence with, comes on the stage, that is, on the market, whether of commodities, labour, or money, even in our days, in the shape of money that by a definite process has to be transformed into capital.

The first distinction we notice between money that is money only, and money that is capital, is nothing more than a difference in their form of circulation.

The simplest form of the circulation of commodities is  $C-M-C$ , the transformation of commodities into money, and the change of the money back again into commodities ; or selling in order to buy. But alongside of this form we find another specifically different form :  $M-C-M$ , the transformation of money into commodities, and the change of commodities back again into money ; or buying in order to sell. Money that circulates in the latter manner is thereby transformed into, becomes capital, and is already potentially capital.

Now let us examine the circuit  $M-C-M$  a little closer. It consists, like the other, of two antithetical phases. In the first phase,  $M-C$ , or the purchase, the money is changed into a commodity. In the second phase,  $C-M$ , or the sale, the commodity is changed back again into money. The combination of these two phases constitutes the single movement whereby money is exchanged for a commodity, and



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the same commodity is again exchanged for money ; whereby a commodity is bought in order to be sold, or, neglecting the distinction in form between buying and selling, whereby a commodity is bought with money, and then money is bought with a commodity.<sup>1</sup> The result, in which the phases of the process vanish, is the exchange of money for money, M—M. If I purchase 2,000 lbs. of cotton for £100, and resell the 2,000 lbs. of cotton for £110, I have, in fact, exchanged £100 for £110, money for money.

Now it is evident that the circuit M—C—M would be absurd and without meaning if the intention were to exchange by this means two equal sums of money, £100 for £100. The miser's plan would be far simpler and surer ; he sticks to his £100 instead of exposing it to the dangers of circulation. And yet, whether the merchant who has paid £100 for his cotton sells it for £110, or lets it go for £100, or even £50, his money has, at all events, gone through a characteristic and original movement, quite different in kind from that which it goes through in the hands of the peasant who sells corn, and with the money thus set free buys clothes. We have therefore to examine first the distinguishing characteristics of the forms of the cir-

<sup>1</sup> “ Avec de l'argent on achète des marchandises, et avec des marchandises on achète de l'argent.”—(Mercier de la Rivière, *L'ordre naturel et essentiel de sociétés politiques*, p. 543.)

cuit M—C—M and C—M—C, and in doing this the real difference that underlies the mere difference of form will reveal itself.

Let us see, in the first place, what the two forms have in common.

Both circuits are resolvable into the same two antithetical phases, C—M, a sale, and M—C, a purchase. In each of these phases the same material elements—a commodity, and money, and the same economical dramatis personæ, a buyer and a seller—confront one another. Each circuit is the unity of the same two antithetical phases, and in each case this unity is brought about by the intervention of three contracting parties, of whom one only sells, another only buys, while the third both buys and sells.

What, however, first and foremost distinguishes the circuit C—M—C from the circuit M—C—M, is the inverted order of succession of the two phases. The simple circulation of commodities begins with a sale and ends with a purchase, while the circulation of money as capital begins with a purchase and ends with a sale. In the one case both the starting-point and the goal are commodities, in the other they are money. In the first form the movement is brought about by the intervention of money, in the second by that of a commodity.

In the circulation C—M—C, the money is in the end converted into a commodity, that serves as a use-

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value ; it is spent once for all. In the inverted form, M—C—M, on the contrary, the buyer lays out money in order that, as a seller, he may recover money. By the purchase of his commodity he throws money into circulation, in order to withdraw it again by the sale of the same commodity. He lets the money go, but only with the sly intention of getting it back again. The money, therefore, is not spent, it is merely advanced.<sup>1</sup>

In the circuit C—M—C, the same piece of money changes its place twice. The seller gets it from the buyer and pays it away to another seller. The complete circulation, which begins with the receipt, concludes with the payment, of money for commodities. It is the very contrary in the circuit M—C—M. Here it is not the piece of money that changes its place twice, but the commodity. The buyer takes it from the hands of the seller and passes it into the hands of another buyer. Just as in the simple circulation of commodities the double change of place of the same piece of money effects its passage from one hand into another, so here the double change of place of the same commodity brings about the reflux of the money to its point of departure.

<sup>1</sup> “ When a thing is bought in order to be sold again, the sum employed is called money advanced ; when it is bought not to be sold, it may be said to be expended.”—(James Steuart, *Works*, &c., edited by Gen. Sir James Steuart, his son, Lond., 1805, V. I., p. 274.

Such reflux is not dependent on the commodity being sold for more than was paid for it. This circumstance influences only the amount of the money that comes back. The reflux itself takes place, so soon as the purchased commodity is resold, in other words, so soon as the circuit  $M-C-M$  is completed. We have here, therefore, a palpable difference between the circulation of money as capital, and its circulation as mere money.

The circuit  $C-M-C$  comes completely to an end, so soon as the money brought in by the sale of one commodity is abstracted again by the purchase of another.

If, nevertheless, there follows a reflux of money to its starting-point, this can only happen through a renewal or repetition of the operation. If I sell a quarter of corn for £3, and with this £3 buy clothes, the money, so far as I am concerned, is spent and done with. It belongs to the clothes merchant. If I now sell a second quarter of corn, money indeed flows back to me, not however as a sequel to the first transaction, but in consequence of its repetition. The money again leaves me, so soon as I complete this second transaction by a fresh purchase. Therefore, in the circuit  $C-M-C$ , the expenditure of money has nothing to do with its reflux. On the other hand, in  $M-C-M$ , the reflux of the money is conditioned by the very mode of its expenditure.

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Without this reflux, the operation fails, or the process is interrupted and incomplete, owing to the absence of its complementary and final phase, the sale.

The circuit  $C-M-C$  starts with one commodity, and finishes with another, which falls out of circulation and into consumption. Consumption, the satisfaction of wants, in one word, use-value, is its end and aim. The circuit  $M-C-M$ , on the contrary, commences with money and ends with money. Its leading motive, and the goal that attracts it, is therefore mere exchange value.

In the simple circulation of commodities, the two extremes of the circuit have the same economic form. They are both commodities, and commodities of equal value. But they are also use-values differing in their qualities, as, for example, corn and clothes. The exchange of products, of the different materials in which the labour of society is embodied, forms here the basis of the movement. It is otherwise in the circulation  $M-C-M$ , which at first sight appears purposeless, because tautological. Both extremes have the same economic form. They are both money, and therefore are not qualitatively different use-values; for money is but the converted form of commodities, in which their particular use-values vanish. To exchange £100 for cotton, and then this same cotton again for £100, is merely a roundabout way of ex-

changing money for money, the same for the same, and appears to be an operation just as purposeless as it is absurd.<sup>1</sup> One sum of money is distinguishable from another only by its amount. The character and tendency of the process M—C—M, is therefore not due to any qualitative difference between its extremes, both being money, but solely to their quantitative difference. More money is withdrawn from circula-

<sup>1</sup> "On n'échange pas de l'argent contre de l'argent," says Mercier de la Rivière to the Mercantilists (l. c., p. 486). In a work, which, ex professo, treats of "trade" and "speculation," occurs the following: "All trade consists in the exchange of things of different kinds; and the advantage" (to the merchant?) "arises out of this difference. To exchange a pound of bread against a pound of bread . . . would be attended with no advantage; . . . Hence trade is advantageously contrasted with gambling, which consists in a mere exchange of money for money."—(Th. Corbet, *An Inquiry into the Causes and Modes of the Wealth of Individuals; or the Principles of Trade and Speculation explained*, London, 1841, p. 5.) Although Corbet does not see that M—M, the exchange of money for money, is the characteristic form of circulation, not only of merchants' capital but of all capital, yet at least he acknowledges that this form is common to gambling and to one species of trade, viz., speculation: but then comes MacCulloch and makes out, that to buy in order to sell, is to speculate, and thus the difference between Speculation and Trade vanishes. "Every transaction in which an individual buys produce in order to sell it again, is, in fact, a speculation."—(MacCulloch, *A Dictionary Practical, &c., of Commerce*, Lond., 1847, p. 1058.) With much more naïveté, Pinto, the Pindar of the Amsterdam Stock Exchange, remarks, "Le commerce est un jeu: (taken from Locke) et ce n'est pas avec des gâteaux qu'on peut gagner. Si l'on gagnait longtemps en tout avec tous, il faudrait rendre de bon accord les plus grandes parties du profit pour recommencer le jeu."—(Pinto, *Traité de la Circulation et du Crédit*, Amsterdam, 1771, p. 231.)

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tion at the finish than was thrown into it at the start. The cotton that was bought for £100 is perhaps resold for £100+£10 or £110. The exact form of this process is therefore  $M-C-M'$ , where  $M'=M+\Delta M$ =the original sum advanced, plus an increment. This increment or excess over the original value I call "surplus-value." The value originally advanced, therefore, not only remains intact while in circulation, but adds to itself a surplus-value or expands itself. It is this movement that converts it into capital.

Of course, it is also possible, that in  $C-M-C$ , the two extremes  $C-C$ , say corn and clothes, may represent different quantities of value. The farmer may sell his corn above its value, or may buy the clothes at less than their value. He may, on the other hand, "be done" by the clothes merchant. Yet, in the form of circulation now under consideration, such differences in value are purely accidental. The fact that the corn and the clothes are equivalents, does not deprive the process of all meaning, as it does in  $M-C-M$ . The equivalence of their values is rather a necessary condition to its normal course.

The repetition or renewal of the act of selling in order to buy, is kept within bounds by the very object it aims at, namely, consumption or the satisfaction of definite wants, an aim that lies altogether outside the sphere of circulation. But when we buy

in order to sell, we, on the contrary, begin and end with the same thing, money, exchange-value ; and thereby the movement becomes interminable. No doubt,  $M$  becomes  $M + \Delta M$ , £100 become £110. But when viewed in their qualitative aspect alone, £110 are the same as £100, namely money ; and considered quantitatively, £110 is, like £100, a sum of definite and limited value. If now, the £110, be spent as money, they cease to play their part. They are no longer capital. Withdrawn from circulation, they become petrified into a hoard, and though they remained in that state till doomsday, not a single farthing would accrue to them. If, then, the expansion of value is once aimed at, there is just the same inducement to augment the value of the £110 as that of the £100 ; for both are but limited expressions for exchange-value, and therefore both have the same vocation to approach, by quantitative increase, as near as possible to absolute wealth. Momentarily, indeed, the value originally advanced, the £100 is distinguishable from the surplus value of £10 that is annexed to it during circulation ; but the distinction vanishes immediately. At the end of the process, we do not receive with one hand the original £100, and with the other, the surplus-value of £10. We simply get a value of £110, which is in exactly the same condition and fitness for commencing the expanding process, as the original £100 was. Money ends the



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movement only to begin it again.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the final result of every separate circuit, in which a purchase and consequent sale are completed, forms of itself the starting-point of a new circuit. The simple circulation of commodities—selling in order to buy—is a means of carrying out a purpose unconnected with circulation, namely, the appropriation of use-values, the satisfaction of wants. The circulation of money as capital is, on the contrary, an end in itself, for the expansion of value takes place only within this constantly renewed movement. The circulation of capital has therefore no limits.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Capital is divisible . . . into the original capital and the profit, the increment to the capital . . . although in practice this profit is immediately turned into capital, and set in motion with the original."—(F. Engels, "Umriss zu einer Kritik der Nationalökonomie, in *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, herausgegeben von Arnold Ruge und Karl Marx, Paris, 1844, p. 99.)

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle opposes Economic to Chrematistic. He starts from the former. So far as it is the art of gaining a livelihood, it is limited to procuring those articles that are necessary to existence, and useful either to a household or the state. "True wealth (*ἡ ἀληθινὸς πλοῦτος*) consists of such values in use; for the quantity of possessions of this kind, capable of making life pleasant, is not unlimited. There is, however, a second mode of acquiring things, to which we may by preference and with correctness give the name of Chrematistic, and in this case there appear to be no limits to riches and possessions. Trade (*ἡ καπηλική* is literally retail trade, and Aristotle takes this kind because in it values in use predominate) does not in its nature belong to Chrematistic, for here the exchange has reference only to what is necessary to themselves (the buyer or seller)." Therefore, as he goes on to show, the original form of trade was barter, but with the extension of the latter, there arose the necessity for money.

As the conscious representative of this movement, the possessor of money becomes a capitalist. His person, or rather his pocket, is the point from which the money starts and to which it returns. The expansion of value, which is the objective basis or main-spring of the circulation  $M-C-M$ , becomes his subjective aim, and it is only in so far as the appropriation of ever more and more wealth in the abstract becomes the sole motive of his operations, that he functions as a capitalist, that is, as capital personified and endowed with consciousness and a will. Use-values must therefore never be looked upon as the

On the discovery of money, barter of necessity developed into *καπηλική*, into trading in commodities, and this again, in opposition to its original tendency, grew into Chrematistic, into the art of making money. Now Chrematistic is distinguishable from  $\mathcal{E}$ conomic in this way, that "in the case of Chrematistic, circulation is the source of riches (*ποιητική χρημάτων . . . διὰ χρημάτων διαβολῆς*). And it appears to revolve about money, for money is the beginning and end of this kind of exchange (*τὸ γὰρ νόμισμα, στοιχείον και πέρασ τῆς ἀλλαγῆς ἐστίν*). Therefore also riches, such as Chrematistic strives for, are unlimited. Just as every art that is not a means to an end, but an end in itself, has no limit to its aims, because it seeks constantly to approach nearer and nearer to that end, while those arts that pursue means to an end, are not boundless, since the goal itself imposes a limit upon them, so with Chrematistic, there are no bounds to its aims, these aims being absolute wealth.  $\mathcal{E}$ conomic not Chrematistic has a limit . . . the object of the former is something different from money, or the latter the augmentation of money. . . . By confounding these two forms, which overlap each other, some people have been led to look upon the preservation and increase of money ad infinitum as the end and aim of  $\mathcal{E}$ conomic."—(Aristotle's *De Rep.*, edit. Bekker, lib. I., c. 8, 9, *passim*.)

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real aim of the capitalist ;<sup>1</sup> neither must the profit on any single transaction. The restless never-ending process of profit-making alone is what he aims at.<sup>2</sup> This boundless greed after riches, this passionate chase after exchange-value,<sup>3</sup> is common to the capitalist and the miser ; but while the miser is merely a capitalist gone mad, the capitalist is a rational miser. The never-ending augmentation of exchange-value, which the miser strives after, by seeking to save<sup>4</sup> his money from circulation, is attained by the more acute capitalist, by constantly throwing it afresh into circulation.<sup>5</sup>

The independent form, *i.e.*, the money-form, which

<sup>1</sup> "Commodities (here used in the sense of use-values) are not the terminating object of the trading capitalist, money is his terminating object."—(Th. Chalmers, *On Pol. Econ. &c.*, 2nd Ed., Glasgow, 1832, pp. 165, 166.)

<sup>2</sup> "Il mercante non conta quasi per niente il lucro fatto, ma mira sempre al futuro."—(A. Genovesi, *Lezioni di Economia Civile* (1765), Custodi's edit. of "Italian Economists." Parte Moderna, t. viii., p. 139.)

<sup>3</sup> "The inextinguishable passion for gain, the auri sacra fames, will always lead capitalists."—(MacCulloch, *The Principles of Polit. Econ.*, London, 1830, p. 179.) This view, of course, does not prevent the same MacCulloch and others of his kidney, when in theoretical difficulties, such, for example, as the question of over-production, from transforming the same capitalist into a moral citizen, whose sole concern is for use-values, and who even develops an insatiable hunger for boots, hats, eggs, calico, and other extremely familiar sorts of use-values.

<sup>4</sup> *Σώζειν* is a characteristic Greek expression for hoarding. So in English to save has the same two meanings: *sauver* and *épargner*.

<sup>5</sup> "Questo infinito che le cose non hanno in progresso, hanno in giro."—(Galiani.)

the value of commodities assumes in the case of simple circulation, serves only one purpose, namely, their exchange, and vanishes in the final result of the movement. On the other hand, in the circulation  $M—C—M$ , both the money and the commodity represent only different modes of existence of value itself, the money its general mode, and the commodity its particular, or, so to say, disguised mode.<sup>1</sup> It is constantly changing from one form to the other without thereby becoming lost, and thus assumes an automatically active character. If now we take in turn each of the two different forms which self-expanding value successively assumes in the course of its life, we then arrive at these two propositions: Capital is money: Capital is commodities.<sup>2</sup> In truth, however, value is here the active factor in a process, in which, while constantly assuming the form in turn of money and commodities, it at the same time changes in magnitude, differentiates itself by throwing off surplus-value from itself; the original value, in other words, expands spontaneously. For the movement, in the course of which it adds surplus value, is its own movement, its expansion,

<sup>1</sup> "Ce n'est pas la matière qui fait le capital, mais la valeur de ces matières."—(J. B. Say, *Traité de l'Econ. Polit.*, 3<sup>me</sup> éd., Paris, 1817, t. I., p. 428.)

<sup>2</sup> "Currency (!) employed in producing articles . . . is capital."—(MacLeod, *The Theory and Practice of Banking*, London, 1855, v. I., ch. i., p. 55.) "Capital is commodities."—(James Mill, *Elements of Pol. Econ.*, Lond., 1821, p. 74.)

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therefore, is automatic expansion. Because it is value, it has acquired the occult quality of being able to add value to itself. It brings forth living offspring, or, at least, lays golden eggs.

Value, therefore, being the active factor in such a process, and assuming at one time the form of money, at another that of commodities, but through all these changes preserving itself and expanding, it requires some independent form, by means of which its identity may at any time be established. And this form it possesses only in the shape of money. It is under the form of money that value begins and ends, and begins again, every act of its own spontaneous generation. It began by being £100, it is now £110, and so on. But the money itself is only one of the two forms of value. Unless it takes the form of some commodity, it does not become capital. There is here no antagonism, as in the case of hoarding, between the money and commodities. The capitalist knows that all commodities, however scurvy they may look, or however badly they may smell, are in faith and in truth money, inwardly circumcised Jews, and what is more, a wonderful means whereby out of money to make more money.

In simple circulation, C—M—C, the value of commodities attained at the most a form independent of their use-values, *i.e.*, the form of money; but that same value now in the circulation M—C—M, or the

apital, suddenly presents itself as an instance, endowed with a motion of its own, through a life-process of its own, in which commodities are mere forms which pass off in turn. Nay, more : instead of presenting the relations of commodities, so to say, into private relations which differentiates itself as original value from surplus-value ; as the father differentiates himself from the son, yet both are one

for only by the surplus value of £10 originally advanced become capital, and takes place, so soon as the son, and by which, is begotten, so soon does their number, and they again become one, £110. More now becomes value in process, surplus, and, as such, capital. It comes out of its circuit, enters into it again, preserves and multiplies its circuit, comes back out of it with surplus, and begins the same round ever again, money which begets money, such is the motion of Capital from the mouths of its producers, the Mercantilists.

Money, in order to sell, or, more accurately, buying and selling, M—C—M', appears certainly

tion fructifiante de la richesse accumulée . . .  
multipliant."—(Sismondi, *Nouveaux prin-*  
t. i., pp. 88, 89.)

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to be a form peculiar to one kind of capital alone, namely, merchants' capital. But industrial capital too is money, that is changed into commodities, and by the sale of these commodities, is re-converted into more money. The events that take place outside the sphere of circulation, in the interval between the buying and selling, do not affect the form of this movement. Lastly, in the case of interest-bearing capital, the circulation  $M-C-M'$  appears abridged. We have its result without the intermediate stage, in the form  $M-M'$ , "en style lapidaire" so to say, money that is worth more money, value that is greater than itself.

$M-C-M'$  is therefore in reality the general formula of capital as it appears *prima facie* within the sphere of circulation.

## CONTRADICTIONS IN THE GENERAL FORMULA OF CAPITAL

THE form which circulation takes when money becomes capital, is opposed to all the laws we have hitherto investigated bearing on the nature of commodities, value and money, and even of circulation itself. What distinguishes this form from that of the simple circulation of commodities, is the inverted order of succession of the two antithetical processes, sale and purchase. How can this purely formal distinction between these processes change their character as it were by magic ?

But that is not all. This inversion has no existence for two out of the three persons who transact business together. As capitalist, I buy commodities from A and sell them again to B, but as a simple owner of commodities, I sell them to B and then purchase fresh ones from A. A and B see no difference between the two sets of transactions. They are merely buyers or sellers. And I on each occasion meet them as a mere owner of either money or commodities, as a buyer or a seller, and, what is more, in both sets of transactions, I am opposed to A only as a buyer and



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to B only as a seller, to the one only as money, to the other only as commodities, and to neither of them as capital or a capitalist, or as representative of anything that is more than money or commodities, or that can produce any effect beyond what money and commodities can. For me the purchase from A and the sale to B are part of a series. But the connection between the two acts exists for me alone. A does not trouble himself about my transaction with B, nor does B about my business with A. And if I offered to explain to them the meritorious nature of my action in inverting the order of succession, they would probably point out to me that I was mistaken as to that order of succession, and that the whole transaction, instead of beginning with a purchase and ending with a sale, began, on the contrary, with a sale and was concluded with a purchase. In truth, my first act, the purchase, was from the standpoint of A, a sale, and my second act, the sale, was from the standpoint of B, a purchase. Not content with that, A and B would declare that the whole series was superfluous and nothing but Hokus Pokus ; that for the future A would buy direct from B, and B sell direct to A. Thus the whole transaction would be reduced to a single act forming an isolated, non-complemented phase in the ordinary circulation of commodities, a mere sale from A's point of view, and from B's, a mere purchase. The inversion, there-

fore, of the order of succession, does not take us outside the sphere of the simple circulation of commodities, and we must rather look, whether there is in this simple circulation anything permitting an expansion of the value that enters into circulation, and, consequently, a creation of surplus-value.

Let us take the process of circulation in a form under which it presents itself as a simple and direct exchange of commodities. This is always the case when two owners of commodities buy from each other, and on the settling day the amounts mutually owing are equal and cancel each other. The money in this case is money of account and serves to express the value of the commodities by their prices, but is not, itself, in the shape of hard cash, confronted with them. So far as regards use-values, it is clear that both parties may gain some advantage. Both part with goods that, as use-values, are of no service to them, and receive others that they can make use of. And there may also be a further gain. A, who sells wine and buys corn, possibly produces more wine, with given labour-time, than farmer B could, and B, on the other hand, more corn than wine-grower A could. A, therefore, may get, for the same exchange-value, more corn, and B more wine, than each would respectively get without any exchange by producing his own corn and wine. With reference, therefore, to use-value, there is good ground for saying that

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“exchange is a transaction by which both sides gain.”<sup>1</sup> It is otherwise with exchange-value. “A man who has plenty of wine and no corn treats with a man who has plenty of corn and no wine ; an exchange takes place between them of corn to the value of 50, for wine of the same value. This act produces no increase of exchange-value either for the one or the other ; for each of them already possessed, before the exchange, a value equal to that which he acquired by means of that operation.”<sup>2</sup> The result is not altered by introducing money, as a medium of circulation, between the commodities, and making the sale and the purchase two distinct acts.<sup>3</sup> The value of a commodity is expressed in its price before it goes into circulation, and is therefore a precedent condition of circulation, not its result.<sup>4</sup>

Abstractedly considered, that is, apart from circumstances not immediately flowing from the laws of the simple circulation of commodities, there is in an exchange nothing (if we except the replacing of one

<sup>1</sup> “L'échange est une transaction admirable dans laquelle les deux contractants gagnent—toujours (!)” —(Destutt de Tracy, *Traité de la Volonté et de ses effets*, Paris, 1826, p. 68.) This work appeared afterwards as *Traité de l'Econ. Polit.*

<sup>2</sup> Mercier de la Rivière, l. c., p. 544.

<sup>3</sup> Que l'une de ces deux valeurs soit argent, ou qu'elles soient toutes deux marchandises usuelles, rien de plus indifférent en soi.” —(Mercier de la Rivière, l. c., p. 543.)

<sup>4</sup> “Ce ne sont pas les contractants qui prononcent sur la valeur ; elle est décidée avant la convention.” —(Le Trosne, p. 906.)

use-value by another) but a metamorphosis, a mere change in the form of the commodity. The same exchange-value, *i.e.*, the same quantity of incorporated social labour, remains throughout in the hands of the owner of the commodity, first in the shape of his own commodity, then in the form of the money for which he exchanged it, and lastly, in the shape of the commodity he buys with that money. This change of form does not imply a change in the magnitude of the value. But the change, which the value of the commodity undergoes in this process, is limited to a change in its money form. This form exists first as the price of the commodity offered for sale, then as an actual sum of money, which, however, was already expressed in the price, and lastly, as the price of an equivalent commodity. This change of form no more implies, taken alone, a change in the quantity of value, than does the change of a £5 note into sovereigns, half-sovereigns and shillings. So far therefore as the circulation of commodities effects a change in the form alone of their values, and is free from disturbing influences, it must be the exchange of equivalents. Little as Vulgar-Economy knows about the nature of value, yet whenever it wishes to consider the phenomena of circulation in their purity, it assumes that supply and demand are equal, which amounts to this, that their effect is nil. If therefore, as regards the use-values exchanged, both buyer and seller may possibly

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gain something, this is not the case as regards the exchange-values. Here we must rather say, "Where equality exists there can be no gain."<sup>1</sup> It is true, commodities may be sold at prices deviating from their values, but these deviations are to be considered as infractions of the laws of the exchange of commodities,<sup>2</sup> which in its normal state is an exchange of equivalents, consequently, no method for increasing value.<sup>3</sup>

Hence, we see that behind all attempts to represent the circulation of commodities as a source of surplus-value, there lurks a *quid pro quo*, a mixing up of use-value and exchange-value. For instance, Condillac says: "It is not true that on an exchange of commodities we give value for value. On the contrary, each of the two contracting parties in every case, gives a less for a greater value. . . . If we really exchanged equal values, neither party could make a profit. And yet, they both gain, or ought to gain. Why? The value of a thing consists solely in its relation to our wants. What is more to the one is less to the other,

<sup>1</sup> "Dove è egualità non è lucro."—(Galiani, *Della Moneta*, in *Custodi*, Parte Moderna, t. iv., p. 244.)

<sup>2</sup> "L'échange devient désavantageux pour l'une des parties, lorsque quelque chose étrangère vient diminuer ou exagérer le prix ; alors l'égalité est blessée, mais la lésion procède de cette cause et non de l'échange."—(Le Trosne, l. c., p. 904.)

<sup>3</sup> "L'échange est de sa nature un contrat d'égalité qui se fait de valeur pour valeur égale. Il n'est donc pas un moyen de s'enrichir, puisque l'on donne autant qu'on reçoit."—(Le Trosne, l. c., p. 903.)

and *vice versa*. . . . It is not to be assumed that we offer for sale articles required for our own consumption. . . . We wish to part with a useless thing, in order to get one that we need ; we want to give less for more. . . . It was natural to think that, in an exchange, value was given for value, whenever each of the articles exchanged was of equal value with the same quantity of gold. . . . But there is another point to be considered in our calculation. The question is, whether we both exchange something superfluous for something necessary.”<sup>1</sup> We see in this passage, how Condillac not only confuses use-value with exchange-value, but in a really childish manner assumes, that in a society, in which the production of commodities is well developed, each producer produces his own means of subsistence, and throws into circulation only the excess over his own requirements.<sup>2</sup> Still, Condillac’s argument is frequently used by modern economists, more especially when the point is to show, that the

<sup>1</sup> Condillac : *Le Commerce et le Gouvernement* (1776). Edit. Daire et Molinari in the *Mélanges d'Econ. Polit.* Paris, 1847, p. 267, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Le Trosne, therefore, answers his friend Condillac with justice as follows : “ Dans une . . . société formée il n’y a pas de surabondant en aucun genre.” At the same time, in a bantering way, he remarks : “ If both the persons who exchange receive more to an equal amount, and part with less to an equal amount, they both get the same.” It is because Condillac has not the remotest idea of the nature of exchange-value that he has been chosen by Herr Professor Wilhelm Roscher as a proper person to answer for the soundness of his own childish notions. See Roscher’s *Die Grundlagen der Nationalökonomie*, Dritte Auflage, 1858.

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exchange of commodities in its developed form, commerce, is productive of surplus-value. For instance, "Commerce . . . adds value to products, for the same products in the hands of consumers, are worth more than in the hands of producers, and it may strictly be considered an act of production."<sup>1</sup> But commodities are not paid for twice over, once on account of their use-value, and again on account of their value. And though the use-value of a commodity is more serviceable to the buyer than to the seller, its money form is more serviceable to the seller. Would he otherwise sell it? We might therefore just as well say that the buyer performs "strictly an act of production," by converting stockings, for example, into money.

If commodities, or commodities and money, of equal exchange-value, and consequently equivalents, are exchanged, it is plain that no one abstracts more value from, than he throws into, circulation. There is no creation of surplus-value. And, in its normal form, the circulation of commodities demands the exchange of equivalents. But in actual practice, the process does not retain its normal form. Let us, therefore, assume an exchange of non-equivalents.

In any case the market for commodities is only frequented by owners of commodities, and the power which these persons exercise over each other, is no

<sup>1</sup> S. P. Newman, *Elements and Polit. Econ.*, Andover and New York, 1835, p. 175.

other than the power of their commodities. The material variety of these commodities is the material incentive to the act of exchange, and makes buyers and sellers mutually dependent, because none of them possesses the object of his own wants, and each holds in his hand the object of another's wants. Besides these material differences of their use-values, there is only one other difference between commodities, namely, that between their bodily form and the form into which they are converted by sale, the difference between commodities and money. And consequently the owners of commodities are distinguishable only as sellers, those who own commodities, and buyers, those who own money.

Suppose then, that by some inexplicable privilege, the seller is enabled to sell his commodities above their value, what is worth 100 for 110, in which case the price is nominally raised 10%. The seller therefore pockets a surplus value of 10. But after he has sold he becomes a buyer. A third owner of commodities comes to him now as seller, who in this capacity also enjoys the privilege of selling his commodities 10% too dear. Our friend gained 10 as a seller only to lose it again as a buyer.<sup>1</sup> The net result is, that all

<sup>1</sup> "By the augmentation of the nominal value of the produce . . . sellers not enriched . . . since what they gain as sellers, they precisely expend in the quality of buyers."—(*The Essential Principles of the Wealth of Nations, &c.*, London, 1797, p. 66.)



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owners of commodities sell their goods to one another at 10 % above their value, which comes precisely to the same as if they sold them at their true value. Such a general and nominal rise of prices has the same effect as if the values had been expressed in weight of silver instead of in weight of gold. The nominal prices of commodities would rise, but the real relation between their values would remain unchanged.

Let us make the opposite assumption, that the buyer has the privilege of purchasing commodities under their value. In this case it is no longer necessary to bear in mind that he in his turn will become a seller. He was so before he became buyer ; he had already lost 10 % in selling before he gained 10 % as buyer.<sup>1</sup> Everything is just as it was.

The creation of surplus-value, and therefore the conversion of money into capital, can consequently be explained neither on the assumption that commodities are sold above their value, nor that they are bought below their value.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> " Si l'on est forcé de donner pour 18 livres une quantité de telle production qui en valait 24, lorsqu'on emploiera ce même argent à acheter, on aura également pour 18 l. ce que l'on payait 24."—(Le Trosne, l. c., p. 897.)

<sup>2</sup> " Chaque vendeur ne peut donc parvenir à renchérir habituellement ses marchandises, qu'en se soumettant aussi à payer habituellement plus cher les marchandises des autres vendeurs ; et par la même raison, chaque consommateur ne peut payer habituellement moins cher ce qu'il achète, qu'en se soumettant aussi à une diminution semblable sur le prix des choses qu'il vend."—(Mercier de la Rivière, l. c., p. 555.)

The problem is in no way simplified by introducing irrelevant matters after the manner of Col. Torrens : "Effectual demand consists in the power and inclination (!), on the part of consumers, to give for commodities, either by immediate or circuitous barter, some greater portion of . . . capital than their production costs."<sup>1</sup> In relation to circulation, producers and consumers meet only as buyers and sellers. To assert that the surplus-value acquired by the producer has its origin in the fact that consumers pay for commodities more than their value, is only to say in other words : The owner of commodities possesses, as a seller, the privilege of selling too dear. The seller has himself produced the commodities or represents their producer, but the buyer has to no less extent produced the commodities represented by his money, or represents their producer. The distinction between them is, that one buys and the other sells. The fact that the owner of the commodities, under the designation of producer, sells them over their value, and under the designation of consumer, pays too much for them, does not carry us a single step further.<sup>2</sup>

To be consistent therefore, the upholders of the

<sup>1</sup> R. Torrens, *An Essay on the Production of Wealth*, London, 1821, p. 349.

<sup>2</sup> "The idea of profits being paid by the consumers is, assuredly, very absurd. Who are the consumers?"—(G. Ramsay, *An Essay on the Distribution of Wealth*, Edinburgh, 1836, p. 183.)

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delusion that surplus-value has its origin in a nominal rise of prices or in the privilege which the seller has of selling too dear, must assume the existence of a class that only buys and does not sell, *i.e.*, only consumes and does not produce. The existence of such a class is inexplicable from the standpoint we have so far reached, *viz.*, that of simple circulation. But let us anticipate. The money with which such a class is constantly making purchases, must constantly flow into their pockets, without any exchange, gratis, by might or right, from the pockets of the commodity-owners themselves. To sell commodities above their value to such a class, is only to crib back again a part of the money previously given to it.<sup>1</sup> The towns of Asia Minor thus paid a yearly money tribute to ancient Rome. With this money Rome purchased from them commodities, and purchased them too dear. The provincials cheated the Romans, and thus got back from their conquerors, in the course of trade, a portion of the tribute. Yet, for all that, the conquered were the really cheated. Their goods were still paid for with their own money.

<sup>1</sup> "When a man is in want of a demand, does Mr. Malthus recommend him to pay some other person to take off his goods?" is a question put by an angry disciple of Ricardo to Malthus, who, like his disciple, Parson Chalmers, economically glorifies this class of simple buyers or consumers. (See *An Inquiry into those principles respecting the Nature of Demand and the necessity of Consumption, lately advocated by Mr. Malthus, &c.*, Lond., 1821, p. 55.)

That is not the way to get rich or to create surplus-value.

Let us therefore keep within the bounds of exchange where sellers are also buyers, and buyers, sellers. Our difficulty may perhaps have arisen from treating the actors as personifications instead of as individuals.

A may be clever enough to get the advantage of B or C without their being able to retaliate. A sells wine worth £40 to B, and obtains from him in exchange corn to the value of £50. A has converted his £40 into £50, has made more money out of less, and has converted his commodities into capital. Let us examine this a little more closely. Before the exchange we had £40 worth of wine in the hands of A, and £50 worth of corn in those of B, a total value of £90. After the exchange we have still the same total value of £90. The value in circulation has not increased by one iota, it is only distributed differently between A and B. What is a loss of value to B is surplus-value to A ; what is "minus" to one is "plus" to the other. The same change would have taken place if A, without the formality of an exchange, had directly stolen the £10 from B. The sum of the values in circulation can clearly not be augmented by any change in their distribution, any more than the quantity of the precious metals in a country by a Jew selling a Queen Ann's farthing for a

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guinea. The capitalist class, as a whole, in any country, cannot over-reach themselves.<sup>1</sup>

Turn and twist then as we may, the fact remains unaltered. If equivalents are exchanged, no surplus-value results, and if non-equivalents are exchanged, still no surplus-value.<sup>2</sup> Circulation, or the exchange of commodities, begets no value.<sup>3</sup>

The reason is now therefore plain why, in analysing the standard form of capital, the form under which it determines the economical organization of modern society, we entirely left out of consideration its most popular, and, so to say, ante-

<sup>1</sup> Destutt de Tracy, although, or perhaps because, he was a member of the Institute, held the opposite view. He says, industrial capitalists make profits because "they all sell for more than it has cost to produce. And to whom do they sell? In the first instance to one another" (l. c., p. 239).

<sup>2</sup> "L'échange qui se fait de deux valeurs égales n'augmente ni ne diminue la masse des valeurs substantantes dans la société. L'échange de deux valeurs inégales . . . ne change rien non plus à la somme des valeurs sociales, bien qu'il ajoute à la fortune de l'un ce qu'il ôte de la fortune de l'autre."—(J. B. Say, l. c., t. I., pp. 344, 345.) Say not in the least troubled as to the consequences of this statement, borrows it, almost word for word, from the Physiocrats. The following example will show how Monsieur Say turned to account the writings of the Physiocrats, in his day quite forgotten, for the purpose of expanding the "value" of his own. His most celebrated saying, "On n'achète des produits qu'avec des produits" (l. c., t. II., p. 438) runs as follows in the original physiocratic work: "Les productions ne se paient qu'avec des productions."—(Le Trosne, l. c., p. 899.)

<sup>3</sup> "Exchange confers no value at all upon products."—(F. Weyland, *The Elements of Political Economy*, Boston, 1853, p. 168.)

diluvian forms, merchants' capital and money-lenders' capital.

The circuit  $M-C-M'$ , buying in order to sell dearer, is seen most clearly in genuine merchants' capital. But the movement takes place entirely within the sphere of circulation. Since, however, it is impossible, by circulation alone, to account for the conversion of money into capital, for the formation of surplus-value, it would appear, that merchants' capital is an impossibility, so long as equivalents are exchanged ;<sup>1</sup> that, therefore, it can only have its origin in the twofold advantage gained, over both the selling and the buying producers, by the merchant who parasitically shoves himself in between them. It is in this sense that Franklin says, "war is robbery, commerce is generally cheating."<sup>2</sup> If the transformation of merchants' money into capital is to be explained otherwise than by the producers being simply cheated, a long series of intermediate steps would be necessary, which, at present, when the simple circulation of commodities forms our only assumption, are entirely wanting.

<sup>1</sup> Under the rule of invariable equivalents commerce would be impossible.—(G. Opdyke, *A Treatise on Polit. Economy*, New York, 1851, pp. 66–69.) "The difference between real value and exchange value is based upon this fact, namely, that the value of a thing is different from the so-called equivalent given for it in trade, i.e., that this equivalent is no equivalent."—(F. Engels, l. c., p. 96.)

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin Franklin, *Works*, Vol. II., edit. Sparks, in *Positions to be examined concerning National Wealth*, p. 376.

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What we have said with reference to merchants' capital, applies still more to money-lenders' capital. In merchants' capital, the two extremes, the money that is thrown upon the market, and the augmented money that is withdrawn from the market, are at least connected by a purchase and a sale, in other words by the movement of the circulation. In money-lenders' capital the form  $M-C-M'$  is reduced to the two extremes without a mean,  $M-M'$ , money exchanged for more money, a form that is incompatible with the nature of money, and therefore remains inexplicable from the standpoint of the circulation of commodities. Hence Aristotle: "since chrematistic is a double science, one part belonging to commerce, the other to economic, the latter being necessary and praiseworthy, the former based on circulation and with justice disapproved (for it is not based on Nature, but on mutual cheating), therefore the usurer is most rightly hated, because money itself is the source of his gain, and is not used for the purposes for which it was invented. For it originated for the exchange of commodities, but interest makes out of money, more money. Hence its name (*τόκος* interest and offspring). For the begotten are like those who beget them. But interest is money of money, so that of all modes of making a living, this is the most contrary to nature." <sup>1</sup>

In the course of our investigation, we shall find that

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, l. c., c. 10.

both merchants' capital and interest-bearing capital are derivative forms, and at the same time it will become clear, why these two forms appear in the course of history before the modern standard form of capital.

We have shown that surplus-value cannot be created by circulation, and, therefore, that in its formation, something must take place in the background, which is not apparent in the circulation itself.<sup>1</sup> But can surplus-value possibly originate anywhere else than in circulation, which is the sum total of all the mutual relations of commodity-owners, as far as they are determined by their commodities? Apart from circulation, the commodity-owner is in relation only with his own commodity. So far as regards value, that relation is limited to this, that the commodity contains a quantity of his own labour, that quantity being measured by a definite social standard. This quantity is expressed by the value of the commodity, and since the value is reckoned in money of account, this quantity is also expressed by the price, which we will suppose to be £10. But his labour is not represented both by the value of the commodity, and by a surplus over that value, not by a price of 10 that is also a price of 11, not by a value that is greater than

<sup>1</sup> "Profit, in the usual condition of the market, is not made by exchanging. Had it not existed before, neither could it after that transaction."—(Ramsay, l. c., p. 184.)



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itself. The commodity-owner can, by his labour, create value, but not self-expanding value. He can increase the value of his commodity, by adding fresh labour, and therefore more value to the value in hand, by making, for instance, leather into boots. The same material has now more value, because it contains a greater quantity of labour. The boots have therefore more value than the leather, but the value of the leather remains what it was ; it has not expanded itself, has not, during the making of the boots, annexed surplus-value. It is therefore impossible that outside the sphere of circulation, a producer of commodities can, without coming into contact with other commodity-owners, expand value, and consequently convert money or commodities into capital.

It is therefore impossible for capital to be produced by circulation, and it is equally impossible for it to originate apart from circulation. It must have its origin both in circulation and yet not in circulation.

We have, therefore, got a double result.

The conversion of money into capital has to be explained on the basis of the laws that regulate the exchange of commodities, in such a way that the starting-point is the exchange of equivalents.<sup>1</sup> Our

<sup>1</sup> From the foregoing investigation, the reader will see that this statement only means that the formation of capital must be possible even though the price and value of a commodity be the same ; for its formation cannot be attributed to any deviation of the one from the other. If prices actually differ from values, we must, first

## *Karl Marx*

friend, Moneybags, who as yet is only an embryo capitalist, must buy his commodities at their to-day's value, must sell them at their later value, and yet at the end of the process must withdraw more value from circulation than he threw into it at starting. His development into a full-grown capitalist must take place, both within the sphere of circulation and without it. These are the conditions of the problem. *Hic Rhodus, hic salta !*

of all, reduce the former to the latter, in other words, treat the difference as accidental in order that the phenomena may be observed in their purity, and our observations not interfered with by disturbing circumstances that have nothing to do with the process in question. We know, moreover, that this reduction is no mere scientific process. The continual oscillations in prices, their rising and falling, compensate each other, and reduce themselves to an average price, which is their hidden regulator. It forms the guiding star of the merchant or the manufacturer in every undertaking that requires time. He knows that when a long period of time is taken, commodities are sold neither over nor under, but at their average price. If therefore he thought about the matter at all, he would formulate the problem of the formation of capital as follows : How can we account for the origin of capital on the supposition that prices are regulated by the average price, *i.e.*, ultimately by the value of the commodities ? I say "ultimately," because average prices do not directly coincide with the values of commodities, as Adam Smith, Ricardo, and others believe.

## THE BUYING AND SELLING OF LABOUR-POWER

THE change of value that occurs in the case of money intended to be converted into capital, cannot take place in the money itself, since in its function of means of purchase and of payment, it does no more than realize the price of the commodity it buys or pays for ; and, as hard cash, it is value petrified, never varying.<sup>1</sup> Just as little can it originate in the second act of circulation, the re-sale of the commodity, which does no more than transform the article from its bodily form back again into its money-form. The change must, therefore, take place in the commodity bought by the first act, M—C, but not in its value, for equivalents are exchanged, and the commodity is paid for at its full value. We are, therefore, forced to the conclusion that the change originates in the use-value, as such, of the commodity, *i.e.*, in its consumption. In order to be able to extract value from the consumption of a commodity, our friend, Moneybags,

<sup>1</sup> "In the form of money . . . capital is productive of no profit."—(Ricardo, *Princ. of Pol. Econ.*, p. 267.)

must be so lucky as to find, within the sphere of circulation, in the market, a commodity, whose use-value possesses the peculiar property of being a source of value, whose actual consumption, therefore, is itself an embodiment of labour, and, consequently, a creation of value. The possessor of money does find on the market such a special commodity in capacity for labour or labour-power.

By labour-power or capacity for labour is to be understood the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in a human being, which he exercises whenever he produces a use-value of any description.

But in order that our owner of money may be able to find labour-power offered for sale as a commodity, various conditions must first be fulfilled. The exchange of commodities of itself implies no other relations of dependence than those which result from its own nature. On this assumption, labour-power can appear upon the market as a commodity, only if, and so far as, its possessor, the individual whose labour-power it is, offers it for sale, or sells it, as a commodity. In order that he may be able to do this, he must have it at his disposal, must be the untrammelled owner of his capacity for labour, *i.e.*, of his person.<sup>1</sup> He and the owner of money

<sup>1</sup> In encyclopædias of classical antiquities we find such nonsense as this—that in the ancient world capital was fully developed,

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meet in the market, and deal with each other as on the basis of equal rights, with this difference alone, that one is buyer, the other seller ; both, therefore, equal in the eyes of the law. The continuance of this relation demands that the owner of the labour-power should sell it only for a definite period, for if he were to sell it rump and stump, once for all, he would be selling himself, converting himself from a free man into a slave, from an owner of a commodity into a commodity. He must constantly look upon his labour-power as his own property, his own commodity, and this he can only do by placing it at the disposal of the buyer temporarily, for a definite period of time. By this means alone can he avoid renouncing his rights of ownership over it.<sup>1</sup>

“ except that the free labourer and a system of credit was wanting.” Mommisen also, in his *History of Rome*, commits, in this respect, one blunder after another.

<sup>1</sup> Hence legislation in various countries fixes a maximum for labour-contracts. Wherever free labour is the rule, the laws regulate the mode of terminating this contract. In some States, particularly in Mexico (before the American Civil War, also in the territories taken from Mexico, and also, as a matter of fact, in the Danubian provinces till the revolution effected by Kusa), slavery is hidden under the form of *peonage*. By means of advances, repayable in labour, which are handed down from generation to generation, not only the individual labourer, but his family, become, *de facto*, the property of other persons and their families. Juarez abolished *peonage*. The so-called Emperor Maximilian re-established it by a decree, which, in the House of Representatives at Washington, was aptly denounced as a decree for the re-introduction of slavery into Mexico. “ I may make over to another the use,

The second essential condition to the owner of money finding labour-power in the market as a commodity is this—that the labourer instead of being in the position to sell commodities in which his labour is incorporated, must be obliged to offer for sale as a commodity that very labour-power, which exists only in his living self.

In order that a man may be able to sell commodities other than labour-power, he must of course have the means of production, as raw material, implements, &c. No boots can be made without leather. He requires also the means of subsistence. Nobody—not even “a musician of the future”—can live upon future products, or upon use-values in an unfinished state; and ever since the first moment of his appearance on the world's stage, man always has been, and must still be a consumer, both before and while he is producing. In a society where all products assume the form of commodities, these commodities must be sold after they have been produced; it is only after their sale that they can serve in satisfying the requirements of their producer. The time necessary for their for a limited time, of my particular bodily and mental aptitudes and capabilities; because, in consequence of this restriction, they are impressed with a character of alienation with regard to me as a whole. But by the alienation of all my labour-time and the whole of my work, I should be converting the substance itself, in other words, my general activity and reality, my person, into the property of another.”—(Hegel, *Philosophie des Rechts*, Berlin, 1840, p. 104, § 67.)

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sale is superadded to that necessary for their production.

For the conversion of his money into capital, therefore, the owner of money must meet in the market with the free labourer, free in the double sense, that as a free man he can dispose of his labour-power as his own commodity, and that on the other hand he has no other commodity for sale, is short of everything necessary for the realization of his labour-power.

The question why this free labourer confronts him in the market, has no interest for the owner of money, who regards the labour market as a branch of the general market for commodities. And for the present it interests us just as little. We cling to the fact theoretically, as he does practically. One thing, however, is clear—nature does not produce on the one side owners of money or commodities, and on the other men possessing nothing but their own labour-power. This relation has no natural basis, neither is its social basis one that is common to all historical periods. It is clearly the result of a past historical development, the product of many economical revolutions, of the extinction of a whole series of older forms of social production.

So, too, the economical categories, already discussed by us, bear the stamp of history. Definite historical conditions are necessary that a product may become a commodity. It must not be produced as the im-

mediate means of subsistence of the producer himself. And we gone further, and inquired under what circumstances all, or even the majority of products take the form of commodities, we should have found that this can only happen with production of a very specific kind, capitalist production. Such an inquiry, however, would have been foreign to the analysis of commodities. Production and circulation of commodities can take place, although the great mass of the objects produced are intended for the immediate requirements of their producers, are not turned into commodities, and consequently social production is not yet by a long way dominated in its length and breadth by exchange-value. The appearance of products as commodities presupposes such a development of the social division of labour, that the separation of use-value from exchange-value, a separation which first begins with commerce, must already have been completed. But such a degree of development is common to many forms of society, which in other respects present the most varying historical features. On the other hand, if we consider money, its existence implies a definite stage in the exchange of commodities. The particular functions of money which it performs, either as the mere equivalent of commodities, or as means of circulation, or means of payment, as hoard or as universal money, point, according to the extent and relative preponderance of the one function or the



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other, to very different stages in the process of social production. Yet we know by experience that a circulation of commodities relatively primitive, suffices for the production of all these forms. Otherwise with capital. The historical conditions of its existence are by no means given with the mere circulation of money and commodities. It can spring into life, only when the owner of the means of production and subsistence meets in the market with the free labourer selling his labour-power. And this one historical condition comprises a world's history. Capital, therefore, announces from its first appearance a new epoch in the process of social production.<sup>1</sup>

We must now examine more closely this peculiar commodity, labour-power. Like all others it has a value.<sup>2</sup> How is that value determined ?

The value of labour-power is determined, as in the case of every other commodity, by the labour-time necessary for the production, and consequently also the reproduction, of this special article. So far as it

<sup>1</sup> The capitalist epoch is therefore characterized by this, that labour-power takes in the eyes of the labourer himself the form of a commodity which is his property ; his labour consequently becomes wage labour. On the other hand, it is only from this moment that the produce of labour universally becomes a commodity.

<sup>2</sup> "The value or worth of a man, is as of all other things his price—that is to say, so much as would be given for the use of his power."—(Th. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, in *Works*, Ed. Molesworth, Lond., 1839-44, v. iii., p. 76.)

has value, it represents no more than a definite quantity of the average labour of society incorporated in it. Labour-power exists only as a capacity, or power of the living individual. Its production consequently pre-supposes his existence. Given the individual, the production of labour-power consists in his reproduction of himself or his maintenance. For his maintenance he requires a given quantity of the means of subsistence. Therefore the labour-time requisite for the production of labour-power reduces itself to that necessary for the production of those means of subsistence ; in other words, the value of labour-power is the value of the means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of the labourer. Labour-power, however, becomes a reality only by its exercise ; it sets itself in action only by working. But thereby a definite quantity of human muscle, nerve, brain, &c., is wasted, and these require to be restored. This increased expenditure demands a larger income.<sup>1</sup> If the owner of labour-power works to-day, to-morrow he must again be able to repeat the same process in the same conditions as regards health and strength. His means of subsistence must therefore be sufficient to maintain him in his normal state as a labouring individual. His natural wants, such as food, clothing,

<sup>1</sup> Hence the Roman *Villicus*, as overlooker of the agricultural slaves, received "more meagre fare than working slaves, because his work was lighter."—(Th. Mommsen, *Röm. Geschichte*, 1856, p. 810.)

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fuel, and housing, vary according to the climatic and other physical conditions of his country. On the other hand, the number and extent of his so-called necessary wants, as also the modes of satisfying them, are themselves the product of historical development, and depend therefore to a great extent on the degree of civilization of a country, more particularly on the conditions under which, and consequently on the habits and degree of comfort in which, the class of free labourers has been formed.<sup>1</sup> In contradistinction therefore to the case of other commodities, there enters into the determination of the value of labour-power a historical and moral element. Nevertheless, in a given country, at a given period, the average quantity of the means of subsistence necessary for the labourer is practically known.

The owner of labour-power is mortal. If then his appearance in the market is to be continuous, and the continuous conversion of money into capital assumes this, the seller of labour-power must perpetuate himself, "in the way that every living individual perpetuates himself, by procreation."<sup>2</sup> The labour-power withdrawn from the market by wear and tear and death, must be continually replaced by, at the very least, an equal amount of fresh labour-power.

<sup>1</sup> Compare W. H. Thornton, *Overpopulation and its Remedy*, Lond., 1846.

<sup>2</sup> Petty.

Hence the sum of the means of subsistence necessary for the production of labour-power must include the means necessary for the labourer's substitutes, *i.e.*, his children, in order that this race of peculiar commodity-owners may perpetuate its appearance in the market.<sup>1</sup>

In order to modify the human organism, so that it may acquire skill and handiness in a given branch of industry, and become labour-power of a special kind, a special education or training is requisite, and this, on its part, costs an equivalent in commodities of a greater or less amount. This amount varies according to the more or less complicated character of the labour-power. The expenses of this education (excessively small in the case of ordinary labour-power), enter *pro tanto* into the total value spent in its production.

The value of labour-power resolves itself into the value of a definite quantity of the means of subsistence. It therefore varies with the value of these means or with the quantity of labour requisite for their production.

<sup>1</sup> "Its (labour's) natural price . . . consists in such a quantity of necessaries and comforts of life, as, from the nature of the climate, and the habits of the country, are necessary to support the labourer, and to enable him to rear such a family as may preserve, in the market, an undiminished supply of labour."—(R. Torrens, *An Essay on the external Corn Trade*, Lond., 1815, p. 62.) The word labour is here wrongly used for labour-power.

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Some of the means of subsistence, such as food and fuel, are consumed daily, and a fresh supply must be provided daily. Others such as clothes and furniture last for longer periods and require to be replaced only at longer intervals. One article must be bought or paid for daily, another weekly, another quarterly, and so on. But in whatever way the sum total of these outlays may be spread over the year, they must be covered by the average income, taking one day with another. If the total of the commodities required daily for the production of labour-power = A, and those required weekly = B, and those required quarterly = C, and so on, the daily average of these commodities =  $\frac{365A + 52B + 4C + \&c}{365}$ . Suppose that

in this mass of commodities requisite for the average day there are embodied 6 hours of social labour, then there is incorporated daily in labour-power half a day's average social labour, in other words, half a day's labour is requisite for the daily production of labour-power. This quantity of labour forms the value of a day's labour-power or the value of the labour-power daily reproduced. If half a day's average social labour is incorporated in three shillings, then three shillings is the price corresponding to the value of a day's labour-power. If its owner therefore offers it for sale at three shillings a day, its selling price is equal to its value, and according to our supposition,

our friend Moneybags, who is intent upon converting his three shillings into capital, pays this value.

The minimum limit of the value of labour-power is determined by the value of the commodities, without the daily supply of which the labourer cannot renew his vital energy, consequently by the value of those means of subsistence that are physically indispensable. If the price of labour-power fall to this minimum, it falls below its value, since under such circumstances it can be maintained and developed only in a crippled state. But the value of every commodity is determined by the labour-time requisite to turn it out so as to be of normal quality.

It is a very cheap sort of sentimentality which declares this method of determining the value of labour-power, a method prescribed by the very nature of the case, to be a brutal method, and which wails with Rossi, that "To comprehend capacity for labour (*puissance de travail*) at the same time that we make abstraction from the means of subsistence of the labourers during the process of production, is to comprehend a phantom (*être de raison*). When we speak of labour, or capacity for labour, we speak at the same time of the labourer and his means of subsistence, of labourer and wages."<sup>1</sup> When we speak of capacity for labour, we do not speak of labour, any more than when we speak of capacity for digestion, we speak

<sup>1</sup> Rossi, *Cours d'Econ. Polit.*, Bruxelles, 1842, p. 370.

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of digestion. The latter process requires something more than a good stomach. When we speak of capacity for labour, we do not abstract from the necessary means of subsistence. On the contrary, their value is expressed in its value. If his capacity for labour remains unsold, the labourer derives no benefit from it, but rather he will feel it to be a cruel nature-imposed necessity that this capacity has cost for its production a definite amount of the means of subsistence and that it will continue to do so for its reproduction. He will then agree with Sismondi : "that capacity for labour . . . is nothing unless it is sold."<sup>1</sup>

One consequence of the peculiar nature of labour-power as a commodity is, that its use-value does not, on the conclusion of the contract between the buyer and seller, immediately pass into the hands of the former. Its value, like that of every other commodity, is already fixed before it goes into circulation, since a definite quantity of social labour has been spent upon it ; but its use-value consists in the subsequent exercise of its force. The alienation of labour-power and its actual appropriation by the buyer, its employment as a use-value, are separated by an interval of time. But in those cases in which the formal alienation by sale of the use-value of a commodity, is not simultaneous with its actual delivery

<sup>1</sup> Sismondi, *Nouv. Princ.*, &c., t. I., p. 112.

to the buyer, the money of the latter usually functions as means of payment.<sup>1</sup> In every country in which the capitalist mode of production reigns, it is the custom not to pay for labour-power before it has been exercised for the period fixed by the contract, as for example, the end of each week. In all cases, therefore, the use-value of the labour-power is advanced to the capitalist : the labourer allows the buyer to consume it before he receives payment of the price ; he everywhere gives credit to the capitalist. That this credit is no mere fiction, is shown not only by the occasional loss of wages on the bankruptcy of the capitalist,<sup>2</sup> but also by a series of more enduring consequences.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "All labour is paid after it has ceased."—(*An Inquiry into those Principles respecting the Nature of Demand, &c.*, p. 104.)  
 "Le crédit commercial a dû commencer au moment où l'ouvrier, premier artisan de la production, a pu, au moyen de ses économies, attendre le salaire de son travail jusqu'à la fin de la semaine, de la quinzaine, du mois, du trimestre, &c. (Ch. Ganilh, *Des Systèmes de l'Econ. Polit.*, 2<sup>m</sup>e édit., Paris, 1821, t. I., p. 150.)

<sup>2</sup> "L'ouvrier prête son industrie," but adds Storch slyly : he "risks nothing" except "de perdre son salaire . . . l'ouvrier ne transmet rien de matériel."—(Storch, *Cours d'Econ. Polit. Econ.*, Pétersbourg, 1815, t. II., p. 37.)

<sup>3</sup> One example. In London there are two sorts of bakers, the "full priced," who sell bread at its full value, and the "undersellers," who sell it under its value. The latter class comprises more than three-fourths of the total number of bakers (p. xxxii. in the *Report of H. S. Trevenenheere, commissioner to examine into "the grievances complained of by the journeymen bakers," &c.*, Lond. 1862). The undersellers, almost without exception, sell bread adulterated with alum, soap, pearl ashes, chalk, Derbyshire stone-dust, and such like agreeable nourishing and wholesome ingredients.



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Nevertheless, whether money serves as a means of purchase or as a means of payment, this makes no alteration in the nature of the exchange of commodities. The price of the labour-power is fixed by the contract, although it is not realized till later, like the rent of a house. The labour-power is sold, although it is only paid for at a later period. It will, therefore, be useful, for a clear comprehension of the relation of the parties, to assume provisionally, that the possessor of labour-power, on the occasion of each sale, immediately receives the price stipulated to be paid for it.

We now know how the value paid by the purchaser

(See the above cited blue book, as also the *Report* of "the committee of 1855 on the adulteration of bread," and Dr. Hassall's *Adulterations detected*, 2nd Ed., Lond., 1862.) Sir John Gordon stated before the committee of 1855, that "in consequence of these adulterations, the poor man, who lives on two pounds of bread a day, does not now get one fourth part of nourishing matter, let alone the deleterious effects on his health." Tremmenheere states (l. c., p. xlviii.), as the reason, why a very large part of the working-class, although well aware of this adulteration, nevertheless accept the alum, stone-dust, &c., as part of their purchase: that it is for them "a matter of necessity to take from their baker or from the chandler's shop, such bread as they choose to supply." As they are not paid their wages before the end of the week, they in their turn are unable "to pay for the bread consumed by their families, during the week, before the end of the week," and Tremmenheere adds on the evidence of witnesses, "it is notorious that bread composed of those mixtures, is made expressly for sale in this manner." In many English and still more Scotch agricultural districts, wages are paid fortnightly and even monthly; with such long intervals between the payments, the agricultural labourer is obliged to buy on credit.

to the possessor of this peculiar commodity, labour-power, is determined. The use-value which the former gets in exchange, manifests itself only in the actual usufruct, in the consumption of the labour-power. The money owner buys everything necessary for this purpose, such as raw material, in the market, and pays for it at its full value. The consumption of labour-power is at one and the same time the production of commodities and of surplus value. The consumption of labour-power is completed, as in the case of every other commodity, outside the limits of the market or of the sphere of circulation. Accompanied by Mr. Moneybags and by the possessor of

. . . He must pay higher prices, and is in fact tied to the shop which gives him credit. Thus at Horningham in Wilts, for example, where the wages are monthly, the same flour that he could buy elsewhere at 1s. 10d. per stone, costs him 2s. 4d. per stone.—(*Sixth Report on Public Health*, by The Medical Officer of the Privy Council, &c., 1864, p. 264.) “The block printers of Paisley and Kilmarnock enforced, by a strike, fortnightly, instead of monthly payment of wages.”—(*Reports on the Inspectors of Factories for 31st Oct. 1853*, p. 34.) As a further pretty result of the credit given by the workmen to the capitalist, we may refer to the method current in many English coal mines, where the labourer is not paid till the end of the month, and in the meantime, receives sums on account from the capitalist, often in goods for which the miner is obliged to pay more than the market price (Truck-system). “It is a common practice with the coal masters to pay once a month, and advance cash to their workmen at the end of each intermediate week. The cash is given in the shop” (*i.e.*, the Tommy shop which belongs to the master); “the men take it on one side and lay it out on the other.”—(*Children’s Employment Commission, III. Report*, Lond., 1864, p. 38, n. 192.)

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labour-power, we therefore take leave for a time of this noisy sphere, where everything takes place on the surface and in view of all men, and follow them both into the hidden abode of production, on whose threshold there stares us in the face "No admittance except on business." Here we shall see, not only how capital produces, but how capital is produced. We shall at last force the secret of profit-making.

This sphere that we are deserting, within whose boundaries the sale and purchase of labour-power goes on, is in fact a very Eden of the innate rights of man. There alone rule Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham. Freedom, because both buyer and seller of a commodity, say of labour-power, are constrained only by their own free will. They contract as free agents, and the agreement they come to, is but the form in which they give legal expression to their common will. Equality, because each enters into relation with the other, as with a simple owner of commodities, and they exchange equivalent for equivalent. Property, because each disposes only of what is his own. And Bentham, because each looks only to himself. The only force that brings them together and puts them in relation with each other, is the selfishness, the gain and the private interests of each. Each looks to himself only, and no one troubles himself about the rest, and just because they do so, do they all, in accordance with the pre-established harmony of

things, or under the auspices of an all-shrewd providence, work together to their mutual advantage, for the common weal and in the interest of all.

On leaving this sphere of simple circulation or of exchange of commodities, which furnishes the “Free-trader *Vulgaris*” with his views and ideas, and with the standard by which he judges a society based on capital and wages, we think we can perceive a change in the physiognomy of our *dramatis personæ*. He, who before was the money owner, now strides in front as capitalist; the possessor of labour-power follows as his labourer. The one with an air of importance, smirking, intent on business; the other, timid and holding back, like one who is bringing his own hide to market and has nothing to expect but—a hiding.

## THE LABOUR-PROCESS AND THE PROCESS OF PRODUCING SURPLUS-VALUE

### SECTION I.—THE LABOUR-PROCESS, OR THE PRODUCTION OF USE-VALUES

The above extract ended with the conclusion that new capital, in the form of profit, could only arise in the process of production itself. It could only arise from actual human labour. Marx has already named this newly accrued profit, this new increment of capital, surplus-value. The next Part of his book is called "The Production of Absolute Surplus-Value."

The first section of the following extract analyses human labour, or work, in the abstract, however. It describes human labour as the fundamental process going on between men and nature, by means of which alone men can live. It distinguishes human labour as distinctively different from the kind of work which animals do, for human labour is conscious and purposive, while animal or insect labour is instinctive. "A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells; but what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality." It is not until the next section headed "The Production of Surplus-Value" that we come on to labour in its distinctively capitalist form. It is in this section that Marx describes how surplus-value actually arises. This

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then, is in some respects the most important section of his whole book.

Marx's way of putting the point may seem confusing at a first reading, but what he is saying is simply this. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that in any given society, at any given time, it takes on the average six hours' work a day to produce enough value to keep a worker and his dependents. Workers will on the average be paid this amount of value by way of wages. If, therefore, the capitalist only works his workers six hours a day, he will get nothing. There will be no profit in the whole affair for him. He might just as well go out of business. But a worker can work much more than six hours a day. Therefore, if (always for the same wage) the worker is made to work twelve hours a day, he will produce twice as much value as is needed for his keep. Therefore, the whole of the value produced in the second six hours a day of his work can be, and will be, taken by the capitalist. Wages will on the average always approximate to what is necessary to keep the worker and his family. If he can produce more than this, then the capitalist will have it. This is where profit, or new capital, or, as Marx calls it, surplus-value, comes from. It arises out of the fact that the worker can produce a surplus over and above his own keep, and that under capitalism, *i.e.*, a system in which the means of production are owned, not by the worker, but by a small class of persons, this surplus is appropriated by these owners.

Moreover, Marx points out, on the rules of commodity production the transaction is perfectly fair. As between the labourer and the capitalist equal value is exchanged for equal value. The value of the worker's labour-power is his keep. This he is given. But his labour-power is able to produce far more value than this. So much the better for the capitalist. By the rules of the game this surplus-value belongs to him. This is the secret of how the capitalist manages to accumulate vast wealth out of the labour of others without infringing the rights of free contract,

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or, in form, enslaving the workers. For the capitalists' monopoly of the means of production enables them to appropriate all surplus-value.—E. J. S.

THE capitalist buys labour-power in order to use it ; and labour-power in use is labour itself. The purchaser of labour-power consumes it by setting the seller of it to work. By working, the latter becomes actually, what before he only was potentially, labour-power in action, a labourer. In order that his labour may reappear in a commodity, he must, before all things, expend it on something useful, on something capable of satisfying a want of some sort. Hence, what the capitalist sets the labourer to produce, is a particular use-value, a specified article. The fact that the production of use-values, or goods, is carried on under the control of a capitalist and on his behalf, does not alter the general character of that production. We shall, therefore, in the first place, have to consider the labour-process independently of the particular form it assumes under given social conditions.

Labour is, in the first place, a process in which both man and Nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material reactions between himself and Nature. He opposes himself to Nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate Nature's productions in a form adapted to his own wants,

By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature. He develops his slumbering powers and compels them to act in obedience to his sway. We are not now dealing with those primitive instinctive forms of labour that remind us of the mere animal. An immeasurable interval of time separates the state of things in which a man brings his labour-power to market for sale as a commodity, from that state in which human labour was still in its first instinctive stage. We presuppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour-process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement. He not only effects a change of form in the material on which he works, but he also realizes a purpose of his own that gives the law to his *modus operandi*, and to which he must subordinate his will. And this subordination is no mere momentary act. Besides the exertion of the bodily organs, the process demands that, during the whole operation, the workman's will be steadily in consonance with his purpose. This means close attention. The less he is attracted by the



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nature of the work, and the mode in which it is carried on, and the less, therefore, he enjoys it as something which gives play to his bodily and mental powers, the more close his attention is forced to be.

The elementary factors of the labour-process are 1, the personal activity of man, *i.e.*, work itself, 2, the subject of that work, and 3, its instruments.

The soil (and this, economically speaking, includes water) in the virgin state in which it supplies<sup>1</sup> man with necessities or the means of subsistence ready to hand, exists independently of him, and is the universal subject of human labour. All those things which labour merely separates from immediate connection with their environment, are subjects of labour spontaneously provided by Nature. Such are fish which we catch and take from their element, water, timber which we fell in the virgin forest, and ores which we extract from their veins. If, on the other hand, the subject of labour has, so to say, been filtered through previous labour, we call it raw material; such is ore already extracted and ready for washing. All raw material is the subject of labour, but not every subject

<sup>1</sup> "The earth's spontaneous productions being in small quantity, and quite independent of man, appear, as it were, to be furnished by Nature, in the same way as a small sum is given to a young man, in order to put him in a way of industry, and of making his fortune."  
—(James Steuart, *Principles of Polit. Econ.*, edit. Dublin, 1770, v. I., p. 116.)

of labour is raw material ; it can only become so, after it has undergone some alteration by means of labour.

An instrument of labour is a thing, or a complex of things, which the labourer interposes between himself and the subject of his labour, and which serves as the conductor of his activity. He makes use of the mechanical, physical, and chemical properties of some substances in order to make other substances subservient to his aims.<sup>1</sup> Leaving out of consideration such ready-made means of subsistence as fruits, in gathering which a man's own limbs serve as the instruments of his labour, the first thing of which the labourer possesses himself is not the subject of labour but its instrument. Thus Nature becomes one of the organs of his activity, one that he annexes to his own bodily organs, adding stature to himself in spite of the Bible. As the earth is his original larder, so too it is his original tool house. It supplies him, for instance, with stones for throwing, grinding, pressing, cutting, &c. The earth itself is an instrument of labour, but when used as such in agriculture implies a whole series of other instruments and a comparatively high develop-

<sup>1</sup> " Reason is just as cunning as she is powerful. Her cunning consists principally in her mediating activity, which, by causing objects to act and re-act on each other in accordance with their own nature, in this way, without any direct interference in the process, carries out reason's intentions."—(Hegel, *Encyklopädie*, Erster Theil, *Die Logik*, Berlin, 1840, p. 382.)

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ment of labour.<sup>1</sup> No sooner does labour undergo the least development, than it requires specially prepared instruments. Thus in the oldest caves we find stone implements and weapons. In the earliest period of human history domesticated animals, *i.e.*, animals which have been bred for the purpose, and have undergone modifications by means of labour, play the chief part as instruments of labour along with specially prepared stones, wood, bones, and shells.<sup>2</sup> The use and fabrication of instruments of labour, although existing in the germ among certain species of animals, is specifically characteristic of the human labour-process, and Franklin therefore defines man as a tool-making animal. Relics of bygone instruments of labour possess the same importance for the investigation of extinct economical forms of society, as do fossil bones for the determination of extinct species of animals. It is not the articles made, but how they are made, and by what instruments, that enables us to distinguish different economical epochs.<sup>3</sup> Instru-

<sup>1</sup> In his otherwise miserable work (*Théorie de l'Econ. Polit.*, Paris, 1819), Ganilh enumerates in a striking manner in opposition to the "Physiocrats" the long series of previous processes necessary before agriculture properly so called can commence.

<sup>2</sup> Turgot, in his *Réflexions sur la Formation et la Distribution des Richesses* (1766), brings well into prominence the importance of domesticated animals to early civilization.

<sup>3</sup> The least important commodities of all for the technological comparison of different epochs of production are articles of luxury, in the strict meaning of the term. However little our written his-

ments of labour not only supply a standard of the degree of development to which human labour has attained, but they are also indicators of the social conditions under which that labour is carried on. Among the instruments of labour, those of a mechanical nature, which, taken as a whole, we may call the bone and muscles of production, offer much more decided characteristics of a given epoch of production, than those which, like pipes, tubs, baskets, jars. &c., serve only to hold the materials for labour, which latter class, we may in a general way, call the vascular system of production. The latter first begins to play an important part in the chemical industries.

In a wider sense we may include among the instruments of labour, in addition to those things that are used for directly transferring labour to its subject, and which therefore, in one way or another, serve as conductors of activity, all such objects as are necessary for carrying on the labour-process. These do not enter directly into the process, but without them it is either impossible for it to take place at all, or possible only to a partial extent. Once more we find the earth

tories up to this time notice the development of material production, which is the basis of all social life, and therefore of all real history, yet prehistoric times have been classified in accordance with the results, not of so-called historical, but of materialistic investigations. These periods have been divided, to correspond with the materials from which their implements and weapons were made, viz., into the stone, the bronze, and the iron ages.

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to be a universal instrument of this sort, for it furnishes a locus standi to the labourer and a field of employment for his activity. Among instruments that are the result of previous labour and also belong to this class, we find workshops, canals, roads, and so forth.

In the labour-process, therefore, man's activity, with the help of the instruments of labour, effects an alteration, designed from the commencement, in the material worked upon. The process disappears in the product; the latter is a use-value, Nature's material adapted by a change of form to the wants of man. Labour has incorporated itself with its subject: the former is materialized, the latter transformed. That which in the labourer appeared as movement, now appears in the product as a fixed quality without motion. The blacksmith forges and the product is a forging.

If we examine the whole process from the point of view of its result, the product, it is plain that both the instruments and the subject of labour, are means of production,<sup>1</sup> and that the labour itself is productive labour.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It appears paradoxical to assert, that uncaught fish, for instance, are a means of production in the fishing industry. But hitherto no one has discovered the art of catching fish in waters that contain none.

<sup>2</sup> This method of determining from the standpoint of the labour-process alone, what is productive labour, is by no means directly applicable to the case of the capitalist process of production.

Though a use-value, in the form of a product, issues from the labour-process, yet other use-values, products of previous labour, enter into it as means of production. The same use-value is both the product of a previous process, and a means of production in a later process. Products are therefore not only results, but also essential conditions of labour.

With the exception of the extractive industries, in which the material for labour is provided immediately by nature, such as mining, hunting, fishing, and agriculture (so far as the latter is confined to breaking up virgin soil), all branches of industry manipulate raw material, objects already filtered through labour, already products of labour. Such is seed in agriculture. Animals and plants, which we are accustomed to consider as products of nature, are in their present form, not only products of, say last year's labour, but the result of a gradual transformation, continued through many generations, under man's superintendence, and by means of his labour. But in the great majority of cases, instruments of labour show even to the most superficial observer, traces of the labour of past ages.

Raw material may either form the principal substance of a product, or it may enter into its formation only as an accessory. An accessory may be consumed by the instruments of labour, as coal under a boiler, oil by a wheel, hay by draft-horses, or it may be mixed with the raw material in order to produce some

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modification thereof, as chlorine into unbleached linen, coal with iron, dye-stuff with wool, or again, it may help to carry on the work itself, as in the case of the materials used for heating and lighting workshops. The distinction between principal substance and accessory vanishes in the true chemical industries, because there none of the raw material reappears, in its original composition, in the substance of the product.<sup>1</sup>

Every object possesses various properties, and is thus capable of being applied to different uses. One and the same product may therefore serve as raw material in very different processes. Corn, for example, is a raw material for millers, starch-manufacturers, distillers, and cattle-breeders. It also enters as raw material into its own production in the shape of seed : coal, too, is at the same time the product of, and a means of production in, coal-mining.

Again, a particular product may be used in one and the same process, both as an instrument of labour and as raw material. Take, for instance, the fattening of cattle, where the animal is the raw material, and at the same time an instrument for the production of manure.

A product, though ready for immediate consumption, may yet serve as raw material for a further pro-

<sup>1</sup> Storch calls true raw materials "*matières*," and accessory material "*matériaux*": Cherbuliez describes accessories as "*matières instrumentales*."

duct, as grapes when they become the raw material for wine. On the other hand, labour may give us its product in such a form, that we can use it only as raw material, as is the case with cotton, thread, and yarn. Such a raw material, though itself a product, may have to go through a whole series of different processes : in each of these in turn, it serves, with constantly varying form, as raw material, until the last process of the series leaves it a perfect product, ready for individual consumption, or for use as an instrument of labour.

Hence we see, that whether a use-value is to be regarded as raw material, as instrument of labour, or as product, this is determined entirely by its function in the labour process, by the position it there occupies : as this varies, so does its character.

Whenever therefore a product enters as a means of production into a new labour-process, it thereby loses its character of product, and becomes a mere factor in the process. A spinner treats spindles only as implements for spinning, and flax only as the material that he spins. Of course it is impossible to spin without material and spindles ; and therefore the existence of these things as products, at the commencement of the spinning operation, must be presumed : but in the process itself, the fact that they are products of previous labour, is a matter of utter indifference ; just as in the digestive process, it is of no importance whatever, that



bread is the produce of the previous labour of the farmer, the miller, and the baker. On the contrary, it is generally by their imperfections as products, that the means of production in any process assert themselves in their character of products. A blunt knife or weak thread forcibly remind us of Mr. A., the cutler, or Mr. B., the spinner. In the finished product the labour by means of which it has acquired its useful qualities is not palpable, has apparently vanished.

A machine which does not serve the purposes of labour, is useless. In addition, it falls a prey to the destructive influence of natural forces. Iron rusts and wood rots. Yarn with which we neither weave nor knit, is cotton wasted. Living labour must seize upon these things and rouse them from their death-sleep, change them from mere possible use-values into real and effective ones. Bathed in the fire of labour, appropriated as part and parcel of labour's organism, and, as it were, made alive for the performance of their functions in the process, they are in truth consumed, but consumed with a purpose, as elementary constituents of new use-values, of new products, ever ready as means of subsistence for individual consumption, or as means of production for some new labour-process.

If then, on the one hand, finished products are not only results, but also necessary conditions, of the

labour-process, on the other hand, their assumption into that process, their contact with living labour, is the sole means by which they can be made to retain their character of use-values, and be utilized.

Labour uses up its material factors, its subject and its instruments, consumes them, and is therefore a process of consumption. Such productive consumption is distinguished from individual consumption by this, that the latter uses up products, as means of subsistence for the living individual; the former, as means whereby alone, labour, the labour-power of the living individual, is enabled to act. The product, therefore, of individual consumption, is the consumer himself; the result of productive consumption, is a product distinct from the consumer.

In so far then, as its instruments and subjects are themselves products, labour consumes products in order to create products, or in other words, consumes one set of products by turning them into means of production for another set. But, just as in the beginning, the only participators in the labour-process were man and the earth, which latter exists independently of man, so even now we still employ in the process many means of production, provided directly by nature, that do not represent any combination of natural substances with human labour.

The labour-process, resolved as above into its simple elementary factors, is human action with a view to the

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production of use-values, appropriation of natural substances to human requirements ; it is the necessary condition for effecting exchange of matter between man and Nature ; it is the everlasting nature-imposed condition of human existence, and therefore is independent of every social phase of that existence, or rather, is common to every such phase. It was, therefore, not necessary to represent our labourer in connection with other labourers ; man and his labour on one side, Nature and its materials on the other, sufficed. As the taste of the porridge does not tell you who grew the oats, no more does this simple process tell you of itself what are the social conditions under which it is taking place, whether under the slave-owner's brutal lash, or the anxious eye of the capitalist ; whether Cincinnatus carries it on in tilling his modest farm or a savage in killing wild animals with stones.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now return to our would-be capitalist. We left him just after he had purchased, in the open market, all the necessary factors of the labour-process ; its objective factors, the means of production, as well

<sup>1</sup> By a wonderful feat of logical acumen, Colonel Torrens has discovered, in this stone of the savage the origin of capital. " In the first stone which he [the savage] flings at the wild animal he pursues, in the first stick that he seizes to strike down the fruit which hangs above his reach, we see the appropriation of one article for the purpose of aiding in the acquisition of another, and thus discover the origin of capital."—(R. Torrens, *An Essay on the Production of Wealth*, &c., pp. 70-71.)

as its subjective factor, labour-power. With the keen eye of an expert, he has selected the means of production and the kind of labour-power best adapted to his particular trade, be it spinning, bootmaking, or any other kind. He then proceeds to consume the commodity, the labour-power that he has just bought, by causing the labourer, the impersonation of that labour-power, to consume the means of production by his labour. The general character of the labour-process is evidently not changed by the fact, that the labourer works for the capitalist instead of for himself; moreover, the particular methods and operations employed in bootmaking or spinning are not immediately changed by the intervention of the capitalist. He must begin by taking the labour-power as he finds it in the market, and consequently be satisfied with labour of such a kind as would be found in the period immediately preceding the rise of capitalists. Changes in the methods of production by the subordination of labour to capital, can take place only at a later period, and therefore will have to be treated of in a later chapter.

The labour-process, turned into the process by which the capitalist consumes labour-power, exhibits two characteristic phenomena. First, the labourer works under the control of the capitalist to whom his labour belongs; the capitalist taking good care that the work is done in a proper manner, and that the

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means of production are used with intelligence, so that there is no unnecessary waste of raw material, and no wear and tear of the implements beyond what is necessarily caused by the work.

Secondly, the product is the property of the capitalist and not that of the labourer, its immediate producer. Suppose that a capitalist pays for a day's labour-power at its value ; then the right to use that power for a day belongs to him, just as much as the right to use any other commodity, such as a horse that he has hired for the day. To the purchaser of a commodity belongs its use, and the seller of labour-power, by giving his labour, does no more, in reality, than part with the use-value that he has sold. From the instant he steps into the workshop, the use-value of his labour-power, and therefore also its use, which is labour, belongs to the capitalist. By the purchase of labour-power, the capitalist incorporates labour, as a living ferment, with the lifeless constituents of the product. From his point of view, the labour-process is nothing more than the consumption of the commodity purchased, *i.e.*, of labour-power ; but this consumption cannot be effected except by supplying the labour-power with the means of production. The labour-process is a process between things that the capitalist has purchased, things that have become his property. The product of this process belongs, therefore, to him, just as much as does the wine which is the

product of a process of fermentation completed in his cellar.<sup>1</sup>

## SECTION 2.—THE PRODUCTION OF SURPLUS-VALUE

The product appropriated by the capitalist is a use-value, as yarn, for example, or boots. But, although boots are, in one sense, the basis of all social progress, and our capitalist is a decided “progressist,” yet he does not manufacture boots for their own sake. Use-value is, by no means, the thing “qu’on aime pour-lui-même” in the production of commodities. Use-values are only produced by capitalists, because, and

<sup>1</sup> “Products are appropriated before they are converted into capital; this conversion does not secure them from such appropriation.”—(Cherbuliez, *Riche ou Pauvre*, edit. Paris, 1841, pp. 53, 54.) “The Proletarian, by selling his labour for a definite quantity of the necessities of life, renounces all claim to a share in the product. The mode of appropriation of the products remains the same as before; it is in no way altered by the bargain we have mentioned. The product belongs exclusively to the capitalist, who supplied the raw material and the necessities of life; and this is a rigorous consequence of the law of appropriation, a law whose fundamental principle was the very opposite, namely, that every labourer has an exclusive right to the ownership of what he produces” (l. c., p. 58). “When the labourers receive wages for their labour . . . the capitalist is then the owner not of the capital only” (he means the means of production) “but of the labour also. If what is paid as wages is included, as it commonly is, in the term capital, it is absurd to talk of labour separately from capital. The word capital as thus employed includes labour and capital both.”—(James Mill, *Elements of Pol. Econ., &c.*, Ed. 1821, pp. 70, 71.)

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in so far as, they are the material substratum, the depositaries of exchange-value. Our capitalist has two objects in view : in the first place, he wants to produce a use-value that has a value in exchange, that is to say, an article destined to be sold, a commodity ; and secondly, he desires to produce a commodity whose value shall be greater than the sum of the values of the commodities used in its production, that is, of the means of production and the labour-power, that he purchased with his good money in the open market. His aim is to produce not only a use-value, but a commodity also ; not only use-value, but value ; not only value, but at the same time surplus-value.

It must be borne in mind, that we are now dealing with the production of commodities, and that, up to this point, we have only considered one aspect of the process. Just as commodities are, at the same time, use-values and values, so the process of producing them must be a labour-process, and at the same time, a process of creating value.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now examine production as a creation of value.

We know that the value of each commodity is

<sup>1</sup> As has been stated in a previous note, the English language has two different expressions for these two different aspects of labour : in the Simple Labour process, the process of producing Use-Values, it is *Work* ; in the process of creation of Value, it is *Labour*, taking the term in its strictly economical sense.—Ed.

determined by the quantity of labour expended on and materialized in it, by the working-time necessary, under given social conditions, for its production. This rule also holds good in the case of the product that accrued to our capitalist, as the result of the labour-process carried on for him. Assuming this product to be 10 lbs. of yarn, our first step is to calculate the quantity of labour realized in it.

For spinning the yarn, raw material is required ; suppose in this case 10 lbs. of cotton. We have no need at present to investigate the value of this cotton, for our capitalist has, we will assume, bought it at its full value, say of ten shillings. In this price the labour required for the production of the cotton is already expressed in terms of the average labour of society. We will further assume that the wear and tear of the spindle, which, for our present purpose, may represent all other instruments of labour employed, amounts to the value of 2s. If, then, twenty-four hours' labour, or two working days, are required to produce the quantity of gold represented by twelve shillings, we have here, to begin with, two days' labour already incorporated in the yarn.

We must not let ourselves be misled by the circumstance that the cotton has taken a new shape while the substance of the spindle has to a certain extent been used up. By the general law of value, if the value of 40 lbs. of yarn = the value of 40 lbs. of cotton



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+ the value of a whole spindle, *i.e.*, if the same working time is required to produce the commodities on either side of this equation, then 10 lbs. of yarn are an equivalent for 10 lbs. of cotton, together with one-fourth of a spindle. In the case we are considering the same working time is materialized in the 10 lbs. of yarn on the one hand, and in the 10 lbs. of cotton and the fraction of a spindle on the other. Therefore, whether value appears in cotton, in a spindle, or in yarn, makes no difference in the amount of that value. The spindle and cotton, instead of resting quietly side by side, join together in the process, their forms are altered, and they are turned into yarn; but their value is no more affected by this fact than it would be if they had been simply exchanged for their equivalent in yarn.

The labour required for the production of the cotton, the raw material of the yarn, is part of the labour necessary to produce the yarn, and is therefore contained in the yarn. The same applies to the labour embodied in the spindle, without whose wear and tear the cotton could not be spun.

Hence, in determining the value of the yarn, or the labour-time required for its production, all the special processes carried on at various times and in different places, which were necessary, first to produce the cotton and the wasted portion of the spindle, and then with the cotton and spindle to spin the yarn, may

together be looked on as different and successive phases of one and the same process. The whole of the labour in the yarn is past labour ; and it is a matter of no importance that the operations necessary for the production of its constituent elements were carried on at times which, referred to the present, are more remote than the final operation of spinning. If a definite quantity of labour, say thirty days, is requisite to build a house, the total amount of labour incorporated in it is not altered by the fact that the work of the last day is done twenty-nine days later than that of the first. Therefore the labour contained in the raw material and the instruments of labour can be treated just as if it were labour expended in an earlier stage of the spinning process, before the labour of actual spinning commenced.

The values of the means of production, *i.e.*, the cotton and the spindle, which values are expressed in the price of twelve shillings, are therefore constituent parts of the value of the yarn, or, in other words, of the value of the product.

Two conditions must nevertheless be fulfilled. First, the cotton and spindle must concur in the production of a use-value ; they must in the present case become yarn. Value is independent of the particular use-value by which it is borne, but it must be embodied in a use-value of some kind. Secondly, the time occupied in the labour of production must not exceed the time

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really necessary under the given social conditions of the case. Therefore, if no more than 1 lb. of cotton be requisite to spin 1 lb. of yarn, care must be taken that no more than this weight of cotton is consumed in the production of 1 lb. of yarn ; and similarly with regard to the spindle. Though the capitalist have a hobby, and use a gold instead of a steel spindle, yet the only labour that counts for anything in the value of the yarn is that which would be required to produce a steel spindle, because no more is necessary under the given social conditions.

We now know what portion of the value of the yarn is owing to the cotton and the spindle. It amounts to twelve shillings or the value of two days' work. The next point for our consideration is, what portion of the value of the yarn is added to the cotton by the labour of the spinner.

We have now to consider this labour under a very different aspect from that which it had during the labour-process ; there, we viewed it solely as that particular kind of human activity which changes cotton into yarn ; there, the more the labour was suited to the work, the better the yarn, other circumstances remaining the same. The labour of the spinner was then viewed as specifically different from other kinds of productive labour, different on the one hand in its special aim, viz., spinning, different, on the other hand, in the special character of its operations,

in the special nature of its means of production and in the special use-value of its product. For the operation of spinning, cotton and spindles are a necessity, but for making rifled cannon they would be of no use whatever. Here, on the contrary, where we consider the labour of the spinner only so far as it is value-creating, *i.e.*, a source of value, his labour differs in no respect from the labour of the man who bores cannon, or (what here more nearly concerns us), from the labour of the cotton-planter and spindle-maker incorporated in the means of production. It is solely by reason of this identity, that cotton planting, spindle making and spinning, are capable of forming the component parts, differing only quantitatively from each other, of one whole, namely, the value of the yarn. Here, we have nothing more to do with the quality, the nature and the specific character of the labour, but merely with its quantity. And this simply requires to be calculated. We proceed upon the assumption that spinning is simple, unskilled labour, the average labour of a given state of society. Hereafter we shall see that the contrary assumption would make no difference.

While the labourer is at work, his labour constantly undergoes a transformation : from being motion, it becomes an object without motion ; from being the labourer working, it becomes the thing produced. At the end of one hour's spinning, that act is repre-

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sented by a definite quantity of yarn ; in other words, a definite quantity of labour, namely that of one hour, has become embodied in the cotton. We say labour, *i.e.*, the expenditure of his vital force by the spinner, and not spinning labour, because the special work of spinning counts here, only so far as it is the expenditure of labour-power in general, and not in so far as it is the specific work of the spinner.

In the process we are now considering it is of extreme importance, that no more time be consumed in the work of transforming the cotton into yarn than is necessary under the given social conditions. If under normal, *i.e.*, average social conditions of production,  $a$  pounds of cotton ought to be made into  $b$  pounds of yarn by one hour's labour, then a day's labour does not count as 12 hours' labour unless 12  $a$  pounds of cotton have been made into 12  $b$  pounds of yarn ; for in the creation of value, the time that is socially necessary alone counts.

Not only the labour, but also the raw material and the product now appear in quite a new light, very different from that in which we viewed them in the labour-process pure and simple. The raw material serves now merely as an absorbent of a definite quantity of labour. By this absorption it is in fact changed into yarn, because it is spun, because labour-power in the form of spinning is added to it ; but the product, the yarn, is now nothing more than a

measure of the labour absorbed by the cotton. If in one hour  $1\frac{2}{3}$  lbs. of cotton can be spun into  $1\frac{2}{3}$  lbs. of yarn, then 10 lbs. of yarn indicate the absorption of 6 hours' labour. Definite quantities of product, these quantities being determined by experience, now represent nothing but definite quantities of labour, definite masses of crystallized labour-time. They are nothing more than the materialization of so many hours or so many days of social labour.

We are here no more concerned about the facts, that the labour is the specific work of spinning, that its subject is cotton and its product yarn, than we are about the fact that the subject itself is already a product and therefore raw material. If the spinner, instead of spinning, were working in a coal mine, the subject of his labour, the coal, would be supplied by Nature ; nevertheless, a definite quantity of extracted coal, a hundredweight for example, would represent a definite quantity of absorbed labour.

We assumed, on the occasion of its sale, that the value of a day's labour-power is three shillings, and that six hours' labour are incorporated in that sum ; and consequently that this amount of labour is requisite to produce the necessities of life daily required on an average by the labourer. If now our spinner, by working for one hour, can convert  $1\frac{2}{3}$  lbs. of cotton into  $1\frac{2}{3}$  lbs. of yarn,<sup>1</sup> it follows that in six

<sup>1</sup> These figures are quite arbitrary.

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hours he will convert 10 lbs. of cotton into 10 lbs. of yarn. Hence, during the spinning process, the cotton absorbs six hours' labour. The same quantity of labour is also embodied in a piece of gold of the value of three shillings. Consequently by the mere labour of spinning, a value of three shillings is added to the cotton.

Let us now consider the total value of the product, the 10 lbs. of yarn. Two and a half days' labour have been embodied in it, of which two days were contained in the cotton and in the substance of the spindle worn away, and half a day was absorbed during the process of spinning. This two and a half days' labour is also represented by a piece of gold of the value of fifteen shillings. Hence, fifteen shillings is an adequate price for the 10 lbs. of yarn, or the price of one pound is eighteenpence.

Our capitalist stares in astonishment. The value of the product is exactly equal to the value of the capital advanced. The value so advanced has not expanded, no surplus-value has been created, and consequently money has not been converted into capital. The price of the yarn is fifteen shillings, and fifteen shillings were spent in the open market upon the constituent elements of the product, or, what amounts to the same thing, upon the factors of the labour-process; ten shillings were paid for the cotton, two shillings for the substance of the spindle worn away, and three shillings

for the labour-power. The swollen value of the yarn is of no avail, for it is merely the sum of the values formerly existing in the cotton, the spindle, and the labour-power : out of such a simple addition of existing values, no surplus-value can possibly arise.<sup>1</sup> These separate values are now all concentrated in one thing ; but so they were also in the sum of fifteen shillings, before it was split up into three parts, by the purchase of the commodities.

There is in reality nothing very strange in this result. The value of one pound of yarn being eighteenpence, if our capitalist buys 10 lbs. of yarn in the market, he must pay fifteen shillings for them. It is clear that, whether a man buys his house ready built, or gets it built for him, in neither case will the mode of acquisition increase the amount of money laid out on the house.

Our capitalist, who is at home in his vulgar economy, exclaims : “ Oh ! but I advanced my money for the

<sup>1</sup> This is the fundamental proposition on which is based the doctrine of the Physiocrats as to the unproductiveness of all labour that is not agriculture : it is irrefutable for the orthodox economist. “ Cette façon d'imputer à une seule chose la valeur de plusieurs autres ” (par exemple au lin la consommation du tisserand), “ d'appliquer, pour ainsi dire, couche sur couche, plusieurs valeurs sur une seule, fait que celle-ci grossit d'autant. . . . Le terme d'addition peint très bien la manière dont se forme le prix des ouvrages de main-d'œuvre ; ce prix n'est qu'un total de plusieurs valeurs consommées et additionnées ensemble ; or, additionner n'est pas multiplier. ” — (Mercier de la Rivière, l. c., p. 599.)



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express purpose of making more money." The way to Hell is paved with good intentions, and he might just as easily have intended to make money, without producing at all.<sup>1</sup> He threatens all sorts of things. He won't be caught napping again. In future he will buy the commodities in the market, instead of manufacturing them himself. But if all his brother capitalists were to do the same, where would he find his commodities in the market? And his money he cannot eat. He tries persuasion. "Consider my abstinence; I might have played ducks and drakes with the 15 shillings; but instead of that I consumed it productively, and made yarn with it." Very well, and by way of reward he is now in possession of good yarn instead of a bad conscience; and as for playing the part of a miser, it would never do for him to relapse into such bad ways as that; we have seen before to what results such asceticism leads. Besides, where nothing is, the king has lost his rights; whatever may be the merit of his abstinence, there is nothing wherewith specially to remunerate it, because the value of the product is merely the sum of the values of the commodities that were thrown into the process of production. Let him therefore console himself

<sup>1</sup> Thus from 1844-47 he withdrew part of his capital from productive employment, in order to throw it away in railway speculations; and so also, during the American Civil War, he closed his factory, and turned his workpeople into the streets, in order to gamble on the Liverpool cotton exchange.

with the reflection that virtue is its own reward. But no, he becomes importunate. He says : "The yarn is of no use to me : I produced it for sale." In that case let him sell it, or, still better, let him for the future produce only things for satisfying his personal wants, a remedy that his physician M'Culloch has already prescribed as infallible against an epidemic of over-production. He now gets obstinate. "Can the labourer," he asks, "merely with his arms and legs, produce commodities out of nothing ? Did I not supply him with the materials, by means of which, and in which alone, his labour could be embodied ? And as the greater part of society consists of such ne'er-do-weels, have I not rendered society incalculable service by my instruments of production, my cotton and my spindle, and not only society, but the labourer also, whom in addition I have provided with the necessaries of life ? And am I to be allowed nothing in return for all this service ?" Well, but has not the labourer rendered him the equivalent service of changing his cotton and spindle into yarn ? Moreover, there is here no question of service.<sup>1</sup> A

<sup>1</sup> "Extol thyself, put on finery and adorn thyself . . . but whoever takes more or better than he gives, that is usury, and is not service, but wrong done to his neighbour, as when one steals and robs. All is not service and benefit to a neighbour that is called service and benefit. For an adulteress and adulterer do one another great service and pleasure. A horseman does an incendiary a great service, by helping him to rob on the highway, and pillage land and houses. The papists do ours a great service, in that they don't

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service is nothing more than the useful effect of a use-value, be it of a commodity, or be it of labour.<sup>1</sup> But here we are dealing with exchange-value. The capitalist paid to the labourer a value of 3 shillings, and the labourer gave him back an exact equivalent in the value of 3 shillings, added by him to the cotton : he gave him value for value. Our friend, up to this time so purse-proud, suddenly assumes the modest demeanour of his own workman, and exclaims : " Have I myself not worked ? Have I not performed the labour of superintendence and of overlooking the spinner ? And does not this labour, too, create value ? " His overlooker and his manager try to hide their smiles. Meanwhile, after a hearty laugh, he re-assumes his usual mien. Though he chanted to us the whole creed of the economists, in reality, he says, he would not give a brass farthing for it. He leaves this and all such like subterfuges and juggling tricks to the professors of political economy, who are paid for it. He himself is a practical man ; and though

drown, burn, murder all of them, or let them all rot in prison ; but let some live, and only drive them out, or take from them what they have. The devil himself does his servants inestimable service. . . . To sum up, the world is full of great, excellent, and daily service and benefit."—(Martin Luther, *An die Pfarherrn, wider den Wucher zu predigen*, Wittenberg, 1540.)

<sup>1</sup> In *Zur Kritik der Pol. Oek.*, p. 14, I make the following remark on this point—" It is not difficult to understand what ' service ' the category ' service ' most render to a class of economists like J. B. Say and F. Bastiat."

he does not always consider what he says outside his business, yet in his business he knows what he is about.

Let us examine the matter more closely. The value of a day's labour-power amounts to 3 shillings, because on our assumption half a day's labour is embodied in that quantity of labour-power, *i.e.*, because the means of subsistence that are daily required for the production of labour-power, cost half a day's labour. But the past labour that is embodied in the labour-power, and the living labour that it can call into action ; the daily cost of maintaining it, and its daily expenditure in work, are two totally different things. The former determines the exchange-value of the labour-power, the latter is its use-value. The fact that half a day's labour is necessary to keep the labourer alive during 24 hours, does not in any way prevent him from working a whole day. Therefore, the value of labour-power, and the value which that labour-power creates in the labour process, are two entirely different magnitudes ; and this difference of the two values was what the capitalist had in view, when he was purchasing the labour-power. The useful qualities that labour-power possesses, and by virtue of which it makes yarn or boots, were to him nothing more than a *conditio sine qua non* ; for in order to create value, labour must be expended in a useful manner. What really influenced him was the specific use-value which this commodity possesses of being

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*a source not only of value, but of more value than it has itself.* This is the special service that the capitalist expects from labour-power, and in this transaction he acts in accordance with the "eternal laws" of the exchange of commodities. The seller of labour-power, like the seller of any other commodity, realizes its exchange-value, and parts with its use-value. He cannot take the one without giving the other. The use-value of labour-power, or in other words, labour, belongs just as little to its seller, as the use-value of oil after it has been sold belongs to the dealer who has sold it. The owner of the money has paid the value of a day's labour-power; his, therefore, is the use of it for a day; a day's labour belongs to him. The circumstance, that on the one hand the daily sustenance of labour-power costs only half a day's labour, while on the other hand the very same labour-power can work during a whole day, that consequently the value which its use during one day creates, is double what he pays for that use, this circumstance is, without doubt, a piece of good luck for the buyer, but by no means an injury to the seller.

Our capitalist foresaw this state of things, and that was the cause of his laughter. The labourer therefore finds, in the workshop, the means of production necessary for working, not only during six, but during twelve hours. Just as during the six hours' process our 10 lbs. of cotton absorbed six hours' labour,

and became 10 lbs. of yarn, so now, 20 lbs. of cotton will absorb 12 hours' labour and be changed into 20 lbs. of yarn. Let us now examine the product of this prolonged process. There is now materialized in this 20 lbs. of yarn the labour of five days, of which four days are due to the cotton and the lost steel of the spindle, the remaining day having been absorbed by the cotton during the spinning process. Expressed in gold, the labour of five days is thirty shillings. This is therefore the price of the 20 lbs. of yarn, giving, as before, eighteenpence as the price of a pound. But the sum of the values of the commodities that entered into the process amounts to 27 shillings. The value of the yarn is 30 shillings. Therefore the value of the product is  $\frac{1}{3}$  greater than the value advanced for its production ; 27 shillings have been transformed into 30 shillings ; a surplus-value of 3 shillings has been created. The trick has at last succeeded ; money has been converted into capital.

Every condition of the problem is satisfied, while the laws that regulate the exchange of commodities, have been in no way violated. Equivalent has been exchanged for equivalent. For the capitalist as buyer paid for each commodity, for the cotton, the spindle and the labour-power, its full value. He then did what is done by every purchaser of commodities ; he consumed their use-value. The consumption of the labour-power, which was also the process of pro-

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ducing commodities, resulted in 20 lbs. of yarn, having a value of 30 shillings. The capitalist, formerly a buyer, now returns to market as a seller, of commodities. He sells his yarn at eighteenpence a pound, which is its exact value. Yet for all that he withdraws 3 shillings more from circulation than he originally threw into it. This metamorphosis, this conversion of money into capital, takes place both within the sphere of circulation and also outside it ; within the circulation, because conditioned by the purchase of the labour-power in the market ; outside the circulation, because what is done within it is only a stepping-stone to the production of surplus-value, a process which is entirely confined to the sphere of production. Thus " tout est pour le mieux dans le meilleur des mondes possibles."

By turning his money into commodities that serve as the material elements of a new product, and as factors in the labour-process, by incorporating living labour with their dead substance, the capitalist at the same time converts value, *i.e.*, past, materialized, and dead labour into capital, into value big with value, a live monster that is fruitful and multiplies.

If we now compare the two processes of producing value and of creating surplus-value, we see that the latter is nothing but the continuation of the former beyond a definite point. If on the one hand the process be not carried beyond the point, where the value paid

by the capitalist for the labour-power is replaced by an exact equivalent, it is simply a process of producing value ; if, on the other hand, it be continued beyond that point, it becomes a process of creating surplus-value.

If we proceed further, and compare the process of producing value with the labour-process, pure and simple, we find that the latter consists of the useful labour, the work, that produces use-values. Here we contemplate the labour as producing a particular article ; we view it under its qualitative aspect alone, with regard to its end and aim. But viewed as a value-creating process, the same labour-process presents itself under its quantitative aspect alone. Here it is a question merely of the time occupied by the labourer in doing the work ; of the period during which the labour-power is usefully expended. Here, the commodities that take part in the process, do not count any longer as necessary adjuncts of labour-power in the production of a definite, useful object. They count merely as depositaries of so much absorbed or materialized labour ; that labour, whether previously embodied in the means of production, or incorporated in them for the first time during the process by the action of labour-power, counts in either case only according to its duration ; it amounts to so many hours or days as the case may be.

Moreover, only so much of the time spent in the



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production of any article is counted, as, under the given social conditions, is necessary. The consequences of this are various. In the first place, it becomes necessary that the labour should be carried on under normal conditions. If a self-acting mule is the implement in general use for spinning, it would be absurd to supply the spinner with a distaff and spinning wheel. The cotton too must not be such rubbish as to cause extra waste in being worked, but must be of suitable quality. Otherwise the spinner would be found to spend more time in producing a pound of yarn than is socially necessary, in which case the excess of time would create neither value nor money. But whether the material factors of the process are of normal quality or not, depends not upon the labourer, but entirely upon the capitalist. Then again, the labour-power itself must be of average efficacy. In the trade in which it is being employed, it must possess the average skill, handiness and quickness prevalent in that trade, and our capitalist took good care to buy labour-power of such normal goodness. This power must be applied with the average amount of exertion and with the usual degree of intensity; and the capitalist is as careful to see that this is done, as that his workmen are not idle for a single moment. He has bought the use of the labour-power for a definite period, and he insists upon his rights. He has no intention of being robbed. Lastly, and for this purpose

our friend has a penal code of his own, all wasteful consumption of raw material or instruments of labour is strictly forbidden, because what is so wasted, represents labour superfluously expended, labour that does not count in the product or enter into its value.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is one of the circumstances that makes production by slave labour such a costly process. The labourer here is, to use a striking expression of the ancients, distinguishable only as *instrumentum vocale*, from an animal as *instrumentum semi-vocale*, and from an implement as *instrumentum mutum*. But he himself takes care to let both beast and implement feel that he is none of them, but is a man. He convinces himself with immense satisfaction, that he is a different being, by treating the one unmercifully and damaging the other *con amore*. Hence the principle, universally applied in this method of production, only to employ the rudest and heaviest implements and such as are difficult to damage owing to their sheer clumsiness. In the slave-states bordering on the Gulf of Mexico, down to the date of the civil war, ploughs constructed on old Chinese models, which turned up the soil like a hog or a mole, instead of making furrows, were alone to be found.—Conf. J. C. Cairns, *The Slave Power*, London, 1862, pp. 46-49. In his *Sea Board Slave States*, Olmsted tells us : “ I am here shown tools that no man in his senses, with us, would allow a labourer, for whom he was paying wages, to be encumbered with ; and the excessive weight and clumsiness of which, I would judge, would make work at least ten per cent. greater than with those ordinarily used with us. And I am assured that, in the careless and clumsy way they must be used by the slaves, anything lighter or less rude could not be furnished them with good economy, and that such tools as we constantly give our labourers and find our profit in giving them, would not last out a day in a Virginia cornfield—much lighter and more free from stones though it be than ours. So, too, when I ask why mules are so universally substituted for horses on the farm, the first reason given, and confessedly the most conclusive one, is that horses cannot bear the treatment that they always must get from negroes ; horses are always soon foundered or crippled by them,

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We now see, that the difference between labour, considered on the one hand as producing utilities, and on the other hand, as creating value, a difference which we discovered by our analysis of a commodity, resolves itself into a distinction between two aspects of the process of production.

The process of production, considered on the one hand as the unity of the labour-process and the process of creating value, is production of commodities; considered on the other hand as the unity of the labour-process and the process of producing surplus-value, it is the capitalist process of production, or capitalist production of commodities.

We stated, on a previous page, that in the creation of surplus-value it does not in the least matter, whether the labour appropriated by the capitalist be simple unskilled labour of average quality or more complicated skilled labour. All labour of a higher or more complicated character than average labour is expenditure of labour-power of a more costly kind, labour-power whose production has cost more time and labour, and which therefore has a higher value, than unskilled or

while mules will bear cudgelling, or lose a meal or two now and then, and not be materially injured, and they do not take cold or get sick, if neglected or overworked. But I do not need to go further than to the window of the room in which I am writing, to see at almost any time, treatment of cattle that would ensure the immediate discharge of the driver by almost any farmer owning them in the North."

simple labour-power. This power being of higher value, its consumption is labour of a higher class, labour that creates in equal times proportionally higher values than unskilled labour does. Whatever difference in skill there may be between the labour of a spinner and that of a jeweller, the portion of his labour by which the jeweller merely replaces the value of his own labour-power, does not in any way differ in quality from the additional portion by which he creates surplus-value. In the making of jewellery, just as in spinning, the surplus-value results only from a quantitative excess of labour, from a lengthening-out of one and the same labour-process, in the one case, of the process of making jewels, in the other of the process of making yarn.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The distinction between skilled and unskilled labour rests in part on pure illusion, or, to say the least, on distinctions that have long since ceased to be real, and that survive only by virtue of a traditional convention ; in part on the helpless condition of some groups of the working-class, a condition that prevents them from exacting equally with the rest the value of their labour-power. Accidental circumstances here play so great a part, that these two forms of labour sometimes change places. Where, for instance, the physique of the working-class has deteriorated, and is, relatively speaking, exhausted, which is the case in all countries with a well developed capitalist production, the lower forms of labour, which demand great expenditure of muscle, are in general considered as skilled, compared with much more delicate forms of labour ; the latter sink down to the level of unskilled labour. Take as an example the labour of a bricklayer, which in England occupies a much higher level than that of a damask-weaver. Again, although the labour of a fustian cutter demands great bodily exertion, and is at

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But on the other hand, in every process of creating value, the reduction of skilled labour to average social labour, e.g., one day of skilled to six days of unskilled labour, is unavoidable.<sup>1</sup> We therefore save ourselves a superfluous operation, and simplify our analysis, by the assumption, that the labour of the workman employed by the capitalist is unskilled average labour.

the same time unhealthy, yet it counts only as unskilled labour. And then, we must not forget, that the so-called skilled labour does not occupy a large space in the field of national labour. Laing estimates that in England (and Wales) the livelihood of 11,300,000 people depends on unskilled labour. If from the total population of 18,000,000 living at the time when he wrote, we deduct 1,000,000 for the "genteel population," and 1,500,000 for paupers, vagrants, criminals, prostitutes, &c., and 4,650,000 who compose the middle-class, there remain the above mentioned 11,000,000. But in his middle-class he includes people that live on the interest of small investments, officials, men of letters, artists, schoolmasters and the like, and in order to swell the number he also includes in these 4,650,000 the better paid portion of the factory operatives ! The bricklayers, too, figure amongst them.—(S. Laing, *National Distress, &c.*, London, 1844.) "The great class who have nothing to give for food but ordinary labour, are the great bulk of the people."—(James Mill, in art., "Colony," *Supplement to the Encyclop. Brit.*, 1831.)

<sup>1</sup> "Where reference is made to labour as a measure of value, it necessarily implies labour of one particular kind . . . the proportion which the other kinds bear to it being easily ascertained."  
—(*Outlines of Pol. Econ.*, Lond., 1832, pp. 22 and 23.)

## THE WORKING DAY

### SECTION I.—THE LIMITS OF THE WORKING DAY

The reader will see clearly from the above analysis that what matters to the capitalist above all else is to prolong the working day. If the working day is so short that in it the worker can produce no more than his keep, then the capitalist will get nothing at all and the whole system will become unworkable. But if on the other hand the working day can be prolonged to the very maximum of human endurance, then the capitalist will get great profits, for he will not have to pay out to the worker any more, and all the new value produced in the increased time of working will go to him.

In the tenth chapter of *Capital* Marx describes the struggle between the workers and the employers—first in pre-capitalist conditions, and then, in much more detail, in the conditions in the middle of the last century—over the question of what should be the length of the working-day. It is clear that, given Marx's assumption of a constant rate of wages at about the figure that will serve to keep the worker and his family going, the main battle between capital and labour will be fought over this question of the length of the working day. Modern twentieth-century conditions in Britain differ to some extent from the conditions described by Marx in this chapter. For, after a century of struggle, the workers have won the right to organize in Trade Unions. These organizations have enabled some workers to obtain wages perceptibly above what will suffice to keep them

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and their families. Hence the struggle between capital and labour is to-day not only, and in many cases not even principally, over the length of the working day. The struggle is fought out rather in terms of the rate of wages. How much, if anything, above the necessary minimum are the workers to get out of the capitalists, by means of the pressure of their organizations? Thus the form of the struggle between capital and labour has been perceptibly modified, but its essential nature remains unchanged.

It is important to include this tenth chapter in any abridgment of *Capital*, for it gives an excellent example of the extraordinarily concrete and practical character of the work. Highly abstract and theoretical passages are everywhere interspersed with chapters crammed with facts and figures, illustrating and demonstrating the theoretical arguments, taken from contemporary British industrial life.

The following chapter begins with a short section emphasizing the quintessential importance of the working day for the capitalists (I have ventured to leave out one or two paragraphs in this section, which did not seem to me essential). The next section begins by showing that every class which has had a monopoly of the means of production has had a greed for surplus labour, for appropriating, that is to say, all the working time of the non-owners of the means of production over and above what they have to keep for themselves in order to live. But, says Marx, this greed for surplus labour only comes to full fruition under capitalism, where endless wealth can be piled up in the hands of the owners of the means of production. The rest of the chapter describes the long fight which raged all through the nineteenth century over the British Workers' attempt to limit by law the length of the working day.—E. J. S.

WE started with the supposition that labour-power is bought and sold at its value. Its value, like that of all other commodities, is determined by the working

time necessary to its production. If the production of the average daily means of subsistence of the labourer takes up 6 hours, he must work, on the average, 6 hours every day, to provide his daily labour-power, or to reproduce the value received as the result of its sale. The necessary part of his working day amounts to 6 hours, and is, therefore, *cæteris paribus*, a given quantity. But with this, the extent of the working day itself is not yet given.

The capitalist then takes his stand on the law of the exchange of commodities. He, like all other buyers, seeks to get the greatest possible benefit out of the use-value of his commodity. Suddenly the voice of the labourer, which had been stifled in the storm and stress of the process of production, rises.<sup>1</sup>

The commodity that I have sold to you differs from the crowd of other commodities, in that its use creates value, and a value greater than its own. That is why you bought it. That which on your side appears a spontaneous expansion of capital, is on mine extra expenditure of labour-power. You and I know on the market only one law, that of the exchange of commodities. And the consumption of the commodity belongs not to the seller who parts with it, but to the buyer, who acquires it. To you, therefore,

<sup>1</sup> " Si le manouvrier libre prend un instant de repos, l'économie sordide qui le suit des yeux avec inquiétude prétend qu'il la vole."  
—N. Linguet, *Théorie des loix civiles, &c.*, London, 1707, t. II., p. 466.



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belongs the use of my daily labour-power. But by means of the price that you pay for it each day, I must be able to reproduce it daily, and to sell it again. Apart from natural exhaustion through age, &c., I must be able on the morrow to work with the same normal amount of force, health and freshness as to-day. You preach to me constantly the gospel of "saving" and "abstinence." Good! I will, like a sensible saving owner, husband my sole wealth, labour-power, and abstain from all foolish waste of it. I will each day spend, set in motion, put into action only as much of it as is compatible with its normal duration, and healthy development. By an unlimited extension of the working day, you may in one day use up a quantity of labour-power greater than I can restore in three. What you gain in labour I lose in substance. The use of my labour-power and the spoliation of it are quite different things. If the average time that (doing a reasonable amount of work) an average labourer can live, is 30 years, the value of my labour-power, which you pay me from day to day is  $\frac{1}{365 \times 30}$  or  $\frac{1}{10950}$  of its total value. But if you consume it in 10 years, you pay me daily  $\frac{1}{10950}$  instead of  $\frac{1}{3650}$  of its total value, *i.e.*, only  $\frac{1}{3}$  of its daily value, and you rob me, therefore, every day of  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the value of my commodity. You pay me for one day's labour-power,

whilst you use that of 3 days. That is against our contract and the law of exchanges. I demand, therefore, a working day of normal length, and I demand it without any appeal to your heart, for in money matters sentiment is out of place. You may be a model citizen, perhaps a member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and in the odour of sanctity to boot ; but the thing that you represent face to face with me has no heart in its breast. That which seems to throb there is my own heart-beating. I demand the normal working day because I, like every other seller, demand the value of my commodity.<sup>1</sup>

We see then, that, apart from extremely elastic bounds, the nature of the exchange of commodities itself imposes no limit to the working day, no limit to surplus-labour. The capitalist maintains his rights as a purchaser when he tries to make the working day as long as possible, and to make, whenever possible, two working days out of one. On the other hand, the peculiar nature of the commodity sold implies a limit to its consumption by the purchaser,

<sup>1</sup> During the great strike of the London builders, 1860-61, for the reduction of the working day to 9 hours, their Committee published a manifesto that contained, to some extent, the plea of our worker. The manifesto alludes, not without irony, to the fact, that the greatest profit-monger amongst the building masters, a certain Sir M. Peto, was in the odour of sanctity. (This same Peto, after 1867, came to an end à la Strousberg.)

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and the labourer maintains his right as seller when he wishes to reduce the working day to one of definite normal duration. There is here, therefore, an antinomy, right against right, both equally bearing the seal of the law of exchanges. Between equal rights force decides. Hence is it that in the history of capitalist production, the determination of what is a working day, presents itself as the result of a struggle, a struggle between collective capital, *i.e.*, the class of capitalists, and collective labour, *i.e.*, the working class.

### SECTION 2.—THE GREED FOR SURPLUS-LABOUR.

#### MANUFACTURER AND BOYARD

Capital has not invented surplus-labour. Wherever a part of society possesses the monopoly of the means of production, the labourer, free or not free, must add to the working time necessary for his own maintenance an extra working time in order to produce the means of subsistence for the owners of the means of production,<sup>1</sup> whether this proprietor be the Athenian καλὸς κἀγαθός, Etruscan theocrat, civis Romanus, Norman baron, American slave owner, Wallachian Boyard, modern landlord or capitalist.<sup>2</sup> It is, however,

<sup>1</sup> "Those who labour . . . in reality feed both the pensioners . . . [called the rich] and themselves."—(Edmund Burke, *l. c.*, p. 2.)

<sup>2</sup> Niebuhr, in his *Roman History*, says very naïvely: "It is evident that works like the Etruscan, which in their ruins astound us, pre-

clear that in any given economic formation of society, where not the exchange-value but the use-value of the product predominates, surplus-labour will be limited by a given set of wants which may be greater or less, and that here no boundless thirst for surplus-labour arises from the nature of the production itself. Hence in antiquity overwork becomes horrible only when the object is to obtain exchange-value in its specific independent money-form ; in the production of gold and silver. Compulsory working to death is here the recognized form of overwork. Only read Diodorus Siculus.<sup>1</sup> Still these are exceptions in antiquity. But as soon as people, whose production still moves within the lower forms of slave-labour, *corvée*-labour, &c., are drawn into the whirlpool of an international market dominated by the capitalistic mode of production, the sale of their products for export becoming their principal interest, the civilized horrors of overwork are grafted on the barbaric horrors of slavery, serfdom, &c. Hence the negro labour in the Southern

suppose in little (!) states lords and vassals." Sismondi says far more to the purpose that "Brussels lace" pre-supposes wage-lords and wage-slaves.

<sup>1</sup> "One cannot see these unfortunates (in the gold mines between Egypt, Ethiopia, and Arabia) who cannot even have their bodies clean, or their nakedness clothed, without pitying their miserable lot. There is no indulgence, no forbearance for the sick, the feeble, the aged, for woman's weakness. All must, forced by blows, work on until death puts an end to their sufferings and their distress."—(Diod. Sic., *Bibl. Hist.*, lib. 3, c. 13.)

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States of the American Union preserved something of a patriarchal character, so long as production was chiefly directed to immediate local consumption. But in proportion, as the export of cotton became of vital interest to these states, the over-working of the negro and sometimes the using up of his life in 7 years of labour became a factor in a calculated and calculating system. It was no longer a question of obtaining from him a certain quantity of useful products. It was now a question of production of surplus-labour itself. So was it also with the *corvée*, e.g., in the Danubian Principalities (now Roumania).

The comparison of the greed for surplus-labour in the Danubian Principalities with the same greed in English factories has a special interest, because surplus-labour in the *corvée* has an independent and palpable form.

Suppose the working day consists of 6 hours of necessary labour, and 6 hours of surplus-labour. Then the free labourer gives the capitalist every week  $6 \times 6$  or 36 hours of surplus-labour. It is the same as if he worked 3 days in the week for himself, and 3 days in the week gratis for the capitalist. But this is not evident on the surface. Surplus-labour and necessary labour glide one into the other. I can, therefore, express the same relationship by saying, e.g., that the labourer in every minute works 30 seconds for himself, and 30 for the capitalist, etc. It

is otherwise with the *corvée*. The necessary labour which the Wallachian peasant does for his own maintenance is distinctly marked off from his surplus-labour on behalf of the Boyard. The one he does on his own field, the other on the seignorial estate. Both parts of the labour-time exist, therefore, independently, side by side one with the other. In the *corvée* the surplus-labour is accurately marked off from the necessary labour. This, however, can make no difference with regard to the quantitative relation of surplus-labour to necessary labour. Three days' surplus-labour in the week remain three days that yield no equivalent to the labourer himself, whether it be called *corvée* or wage-labour. But in the capitalist the greed for surplus-labour appears in the straining after an unlimited extension of the working day, in the Boyard more simply in a direct hunting after days of *corvée*.<sup>1</sup>

In the Danubian Principalities the *corvée* was mixed up with rents in kind and other appurtenances of bondage, but it formed the most important tribute paid to the ruling class. Where this was the case, the *corvée* rarely arose from serfdom; serfdom much more frequently on the other hand took origin from the *corvée*.<sup>2</sup> This is what took place in the Roumanian

<sup>1</sup> That which follows refers to the situation in the Roumanian provinces before the change effected since the Crimean war.

<sup>2</sup> This holds likewise for Germany, and especially for Prussia east of the Elbe. In the 15th century the German peasant was nearly

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provinces. Their original mode of production was based on community of the soil, but not in the Slavonic or Indian form. Part of the land was cultivated in severalty as freehold by the members of the community, another part—*ager publicus*—was cultivated by them in common. The products of this common labour served partly as a reserve fund against bad harvests and other accidents, partly as a public store for providing the costs of war, religion, and other common expenses. In course of time military and clerical dignitaries usurped, along with the common land, the labour spent upon it. The labour of the free peasants on their common land was transformed into *corvée* for the thieves of the common land. This *corvée* soon developed into a servile relationship existing in point of fact, not in point of law, until Russia, the liberator of the world, made it legal under pretence of abolishing serfdom. The code of the *corvée*, which the Russian General Kisseleff proclaimed

everywhere a man, who, whilst subject to certain rents paid in produce and labour, was otherwise at least practically free. The German colonists in Brandenburg, Pomerania, Silesia, and Eastern Prussia, were even legally acknowledged as free men. The victory of the nobility in the peasants' war put an end to that. Not only were the conquered South German peasants again enslaved. From the middle of the 16th century the peasants of Eastern Prussia, Brandenburg, Pomerania, and Silesia, and soon after the free peasants of Schleswig-Holstein were degraded to the condition of serfs.—(Maurer, *Fronhöfe*, iv. vol. ; Meitzen, *Der Boden des preussischen Staats* ; Hansen, *Leibeigenschaft in Schleswig-Holstein*.—Ed.)

In 1831, was of course dictated by the Boyards themselves. Thus Russia conquered with one blow the magnates of the Danubian provinces, and the applause of liberal crétins throughout Europe.

According to the "*Réglement organique*," as this code of the *corvée* is called, every Wallachian peasant owes to the so-called landlord, besides a mass of detailed payments in kind : (1), 12 days of general labour ; (2), one day of field labour ; (3), one day of wood carrying. In all, 14 days in the year. With deep insight into political economy, however, the working day is not taken in its ordinary sense, but as the working day necessary to the production of an average daily product ; and that average daily product is determined in so crafty a way that no Cyclops would be done with it in 24 hours. In dry words, the *Réglement* itself declares with true Russian irony that by 12 working days one must understand the product of the manual labour of 36 days, by 1 day of field labour 3 days, and by 1 day of wood carrying in like manner three times as much. In all, 42 *corvée* days. To this had to be added the so-called *jobagie*, service due to the lord for extraordinary occasions. In proportion to the size of its population, every village has to furnish annually a definite contingent to the *jobagie*. This additional *corvée* is estimated at 14 days for each Wallachian peasant. Thus the prescribed *corvée* amounts to 56 working days yearly. But the agri-



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cultural year in Wallachia numbers in consequence of the severe climate only 210 days, of which 40 for Sundays and holidays, 30 on an average for bad weather, together 70 days, do not count. 140 working days remain. The ratio of the corvée to the necessary labour  $\frac{56}{84}$  or  $66\frac{2}{3}\%$  gives a much smaller rate of surplus value than that which regulates the labour of the English agricultural or factory labourer. This is, however, only the legally prescribed corvée. And in a spirit yet more "liberal" than the English Factory Acts, the "Réglement organique" has known how to facilitate its own evasion. After it has made 56 days out of 12, the nominal day's work of each of the 56 corvée days is again so arranged that a portion of it must fall on the ensuing day. In one day, e.g., must be weeded an extent of land, which, for this work, especially in maize plantations, needs twice as much time. The legal day's work for some kinds of agricultural labour is interpretable in such a way that the day begins in May and ends in October. In Moldavia conditions are still harder. "The 12 corvée days of the 'Réglement organique,'" cried a Boyard drunk with victory, "amount to 365 days in the year."<sup>1</sup>

If the Réglement organique of the Danubian provinces was a positive expression of the greed for surplus-labour which every paragraph legalized, the English

<sup>1</sup> Further details are to be found in E. Regnault's *Histoire politique et sociale des Principautés Danubiennes*, Paris, 1855.

Factory Acts are the negative expression of the same greed. These acts curb the passion of capital for a limitless draining of labour-power, by forcibly limiting the working day by state regulations, made by a state that is ruled by capitalist and landlord. Apart from the working-class movement that daily grew more threatening, the limiting of factory labour was dictated by the same necessity which spread guano over the English fields. The same blind eagerness for plunder that in the one case exhausted the soil, had, in the other, torn up by the roots the living force of the nation. Periodical epidemics speak on this point as clearly as the diminishing military standard in Germany and France.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "In general and within certain limits, exceeding the medium size of their kind, is evidence of the prosperity of organic beings. As to man, his bodily height lessens if his due growth is interfered with, either by physical or social conditions. In all European countries in which the conscription holds, since its introduction, the medium height of adult man, and generally their fitness for military service, has diminished. Before the revolution (1789), the minimum for the infantry in France was 165 centimetres; in 1818 (law of March 10th), 157; by the law of 1852, 156 c.m.; on the average in France more than half are rejected on account of deficient height or bodily weakness. The military standard in Saxony was in 1780, 178 c.m. It is now 155. In Prussia it is 157. According to the statement of Dr. Meyer in the *Bavarian Gazette*, May 9th, 1862, the result of an average of 9 years is, that in Prussia out of 1000 conscripts 716 were unfit for military service, 317 because of deficiency in height, and 399 because of bodily defects. . . . Berlin in 1858 could not provide its contingent of recruits; it was 156 men short." —J. von Liebig, *Die Chemie in ihrer Anwendung auf Agrikultur und Physiologie*, 1863, 7th Ed., vol. I., pp. 117, 118.

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The Factory Act of 1850 now in force (1867) allows for the average working-day 10 hours, *i.e.*, for the first 5 days 12 hours from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., including  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour for breakfast, and an hour for dinner, and thus leaving  $10\frac{1}{2}$  working hours, and 8 hours for Saturday, from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., of which  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour is subtracted for breakfast. 60 working hours are left, 10 for each of the first 5 days,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  for the last.<sup>1</sup> Certain guardians of these laws are appointed, Factory Inspectors, directly under the Home Secretary, whose reports are published half-yearly, by order of Parliament. They give regular and official statistics of the capitalistic greed for surplus-labour.

Let us listen, for a moment, to the Factory Inspectors.<sup>2</sup> "The fraudulent millowner begins work

<sup>1</sup> The history of the Factory Act of 1850 will be found in the course of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> I only touch here and there on the period from the beginning of modern industry in England to 1845. For this period I refer the reader to *Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England*, von Friedrich Engels, Leipzig, 1845. How completely Engels understood the nature of the capitalist mode of production is shown by the Factory Reports, Reports on Mines, &c., that have appeared since 1845, and how wonderfully he painted the circumstances in detail is seen on the most superficial comparison of his work with the official reports of the Children's Employment Commission, published 18 to 20 years later (1863-1867). These deal especially with the branches of industry in which the Factory Acts had not, up to 1862, been introduced, in fact are not yet introduced. Here, then, little or no alteration had been enforced, by authority, in the conditions painted by Engels. I borrow my examples chiefly from the free trade period after 1848, that age of paradise, of which the

a quarter of an hour (sometimes more, sometimes less) before 6 a.m., and leaves off a quarter of an hour (sometimes more, sometimes less) after 6 p.m. He takes 5 minutes from the beginning and from the end of the half hour nominally allowed for breakfast, and 10 minutes at the beginning and end of the hour nominally allowed for dinner. He works for a quarter of an hour (sometimes more, sometimes less) after 2 p.m. on Saturday. Thus his gain is—

Before 6 a.m.. . . . .	15 minutes.
After 6 p.m. . . . .	15 „
At breakfast time . . . . .	10 „
At dinner time . . . . .	20 „
	<hr/>
	60 „

Five days—300 minutes.

On Saturday before 6 a.m. . . . .	15 minutes.
At breakfast time . . . . .	10 „
After 2 p.m. . . . .	15 „
	<hr/>
	40 minutes.

Total weekly. . . . . 340 minutes.

commercial travellers for the great firm of free trade, blatant as ignorant, tell such fabulous tales. For the rest England figures here in the foreground because she is the classic representative of capitalist production, and she alone has a continuous set of official statistics of the things we are considering.

## *The Greed for Surplus-Labour*

Or 5 hours and 40 minutes weekly, which multiplied by 50 working weeks in the year (allowing two for holidays and occasional stoppages) is equal to 27 working days.”<sup>1</sup>

“Five minutes a day’s increased work, multiplied by weeks, are equal to two and a half days of produce in the year.”<sup>2</sup>

“An additional hour a day gained by small instalments before 6 a.m., after 6 p.m., and at the beginning and end of the times nominally fixed for meals, is nearly equivalent to working 13 months in the year.”<sup>3</sup>

Crises during which production is interrupted and the factories work “short time,” *i.e.*, for only a part of the week, naturally do not affect the tendency to extend the working day. The less business there is, the more profit has to be made on the business done. The less time spent in work, the more of that time has to be turned into surplus labour-time.

Thus the Factory Inspector’s report on the period of the crisis from 1857 to 1858 :

“It may seem inconsistent that there should be any overworking at a time when trade is so bad ; but that very badness leads to the transgression by

<sup>1</sup> *Suggestions, &c.*, by Mr. L. Horner, Inspector of Factories, in : *Factory Regulations Act*. Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 9th August, 1859, pp. 4, 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Reports of the Inspector of Factories for the half year, October, 1856*, p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> *Reports, &c.*, 30th April, 1858, p. 9.

unscrupulous men, they get the extra profit of it. . . . In the last half year, says Leonard Horner, 122 mills in my district have been given up ; 143 were found standing," yet, overwork is continued beyond the legal hours.<sup>1</sup>

"For a great part of the time," says Mr. Howell, "owing to the depression of trade, many factories were altogether closed, and a still greater number were working short time. I continue, however, to receive about the usual number of complaints that half, or three-quarters of an hour in the day, are snatched from the workers by encroaching upon the times professedly allowed for rest and refreshment."<sup>2</sup> The same phenomenon was reproduced on a smaller scale during the frightful cotton-crisis from 1861 to 1865.<sup>3</sup> "It is sometimes advanced by way of excuse, when persons are found at work in a factory, either at a meal hour, or at some illegal time, that they will not leave the mill at the appointed hour, and that compulsion is necessary to force them to cease work [cleaning their machinery, &c.], especially on Saturday afternoons. But, if the hands remain in a factory after the machinery has ceased to revolve . . . they would not have been so employed if sufficient time had been

<sup>1</sup> *Reports, &c.*, l. c., p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> *Reports, &c.*, l. c., p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Reports, &c.*, for the half year ending 30th April, 1861, see Appendix No. 2 ; *Reports, &c.*, 31st October, 1862, pp. 7, 52, 53. The violations of the Acts became more numerous during the last half year 1863. Cf. *Reports, &c.*, ending 31st October, 1863, p. 7.

## *The Greed for Surplus-Labour*

set apart specially for cleaning, &c., either before 6 a.m. [*sic* !] or before 2 p.m. on Saturday afternoons.”<sup>1</sup>

“The profit to be gained by it (overworking in violation of the Act) appears to be, to many, a greater temptation than they can resist ; they calculate upon the chance of not being found out ; and when they see the small amount of penalty and costs, which those who have been convicted have had to pay, they find that if they should be detected there will still be a

<sup>1</sup> *Reports, &c., October 31st, 1860, p. 23.* With what fanaticism, according to the evidence of manufacturers given in courts of law, their hands set themselves against every interruption in factory labour, the following curious circumstance shows. In the beginning of June, 1836, information reached the magistrates of Dewsbury (Yorkshire) that the owners of 8 large mills in the neighbourhood of Batley had violated the Factory Acts. Some of these gentlemen were accused of having kept at work 5 boys between 12 and 15 years of age, from 6 a.m. on Friday to 4 p.m. on the following Saturday, not allowing them any respite except for meals and one hour for sleep at midnight. And these children had to do this ceaseless labour of 30 hours in the “shoddy-hole,” as the hole is called, in which the woollen rags are pulled in pieces, and where a dense atmosphere of dust, shreds, &c., forces even the adult workman to cover his mouth continually with handkerchiefs for the protection of his lungs ! The accused gentlemen affirm in lieu of taking an oath—as quakers they were too scrupulously religious to take an oath—that they had, in their great compassion for the unhappy children, allowed them four hours for sleep, but the obstinate children absolutely would not go to bed. The quaker gentlemen were mulcted in £20. Dryden anticipated these gentry :

“Fox full fraught in seeming sanctity,  
That feared an oath, but like the devil would lie,  
That look’d like Lent, and had the holy leer,  
And durst not sin ! before he said his prayer ! ”

considerable balance of gain. . . .<sup>1</sup> In cases where the additional time is gained by a multiplication of small thefts in the course of the day, there are insuperable difficulties to the inspectors making out a case."<sup>2</sup>

These "small thefts" of capital from the labourer's meal and recreation time, the factory inspectors also designate as "petty pilfering of minutes,"<sup>3</sup> "snatching a few minutes,"<sup>3</sup> or, as the labourers technically called them, "nibbling and cribbling at meal times."<sup>3</sup>

It is evident that in this atmosphere the formation of surplus-value by surplus-labour, is no secret. "If you allow me," said a highly respectable master to me, "to work only ten minutes in the day overtime, you put one thousand a year in my pocket."<sup>3</sup> "Moments are the elements of profit."<sup>4</sup>

Nothing is from this point of view more characteristic than the designation of the workers who work full time as "full-timers," and the children under 13 who are only allowed to work 6 hours as "half-timers." The worker is here nothing more than personified labour-time. All individual distinctions are merged in those of "full-timers" and "half-timers."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Rep.*, 31st Oct., 1856, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *l. c.*, p. 35. <sup>3</sup> *l. c.*, p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Insp., &c.*, 30th April, 1860, p. 56.

<sup>5</sup> This is the official expression both in the factories and in the reports.



## *English Industry : Exploitation*

### SECTION 3.—BRANCHES OF ENGLISH INDUSTRY WITHOUT LEGAL LIMITS TO EXPLOITATION

We have hitherto considered the tendency to the extension of the working day, the were-wolf's hunger for surplus-labour in a department where the monstrous exactions, not surpassed, says an English bourgeois economist, by the cruelties of the Spaniards to the American red-skins,<sup>1</sup> caused capital at last to be bound by the chains of legal regulations. Now, let us cast a glance at certain branches of production in which the exploitation of labour is either free from fetters to this day, or was so yesterday.

Mr. Broughton Charlton, county magistrate, declared, as chairman of a meeting held at the Assembly Rooms, Nottingham, on the 14th January, 1860, "that there was an amount of privation and suffering among that portion of the population connected with the lace trade, unknown in other parts of the kingdom,

<sup>1</sup> "The cupidity of mill-owners whose cruelties in the pursuit of gain have hardly been exceeded by those perpetrated by the Spaniards on the conquest of America in the pursuit of gold." —John Wade, *History of the Middle and Working Classes*, 3rd Ed., London, 1835, p. 114. The theoretical part of this book, a kind of hand-book of Political Economy, is, considering the time of its publication, original in some parts, e.g., on commercial crises. The historical part is, to a great extent, a shameless plagiarism of Sir F. M. Eden's *History of the Poor*, London, 1799.

indeed, in the civilized world. . . . Children of nine or ten years are dragged from their squalid beds at two, three, or four o'clock in the morning and compelled to work for a bare subsistence until ten, eleven, or twelve at night, their limbs wearing away, their frames dwindling, their faces whitening, and their humanity absolutely sinking into a stone-like torpor, utterly horrible to contemplate. . . . We are not surprised that Mr. Mallett, or any other manufacturer, should stand forward and protest against discussion. . . . The system, as the Rev. Montagu Valpy describes it, is one of unmitigated slavery, socially, physically, morally, and spiritually. . . . What can be thought of a town which holds a public meeting to petition that the period of labour for men shall be diminished to eighteen hours a day ? . . . We declaim against the Virginian and Carolinian cotton-planters. Is their black-market, their lash, and their barter of human flesh more detestable than this slow sacrifice of humanity which takes place in order that veils and collars may be fabricated for the benefit of capitalists ? ”<sup>1</sup>

The potteries of Staffordshire have, during the last 22 years, been the subject of three parliamentary inquiries. The result is embodied in Mr. Scriven's Report of 1841 to the "Children's Employment Commissioners," in the report of Dr. Greenhow of

<sup>1</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 17th January, 1860.

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1860 published by order of the medical officer of the Privy Council (*Public Health, 3rd Report, 112-113*), lastly, in the report of Mr. Longe of 1862 in the "*First Report of the Children's Employment Commission, of the 13th June, 1863.*" For my purpose it is enough to take, from the reports of 1860 and 1863, some depositions of the exploited children themselves. From the children we may form an opinion as to the adults, especially the girls and women, and that in a branch of industry by the side of which cotton-spinning appears an agreeable and healthful occupation.<sup>1</sup>

William Wood, 9 years old, was 7 years and 10 months when he began to work. He "ran moulds" (carried ready-moulded articles into the drying room, afterwards bringing back the empty mould) from the beginning. He came to work every day in the week at 6 a.m., and left off about 9 p.m. "I work till 9 o'clock at night six days in the week. I have done so seven or eight weeks." Fifteen hours of labour for a child 7 years old ! J. Murray, 12 years of age, says : "I turn jigger, and run moulds. I come at 6. Sometimes I come at 4. I worked all night last night, till 6 o'clock this morning. I have not been in bed since the night before last. There were eight or nine other boys working last night. All but one have come this morning. I get 3 shillings and sixpence. I do

<sup>1</sup> Cf. F. Engels' *Lage, &c.*, pp. 249-51.

not get any more for working at night. I worked two nights last week." Fernyhough, a boy of ten : " I have not always an hour (for dinner). I have only half an hour sometimes ; on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday." <sup>1</sup>

Dr. Greenhow states that the average duration of life in the pottery districts of Stoke-on-Trent, and Wolstanton, is extraordinarily short. Although in the district of Stoke, only 36.6 % and in Wolstanton only 30.4 % of the adult male population above 20 are employed in the potteries, among the men of that age in the first district more than half, in the second, nearly  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the whole deaths are the result of pulmonary diseases among the potters. Dr. Boothroyd, a medical practitioner at Hanley, says : " Each successive generation of potters is more dwarfed and less robust than the preceding one." In like manner another doctor, Mr. M'Bean : " Since he began to practise among the potters 25 years ago, he had observed a marked degeneration especially shown in diminution of stature and breadth." These statements are taken from the report of Dr. Greenhow in 1860.<sup>2</sup>

From the report of the Commissioners in 1863, the following : Dr. J. T. Arledge, senior physician of the North Staffordshire Infirmary, says : " The potters

<sup>1</sup> *Children's Employment Commission. First report, &c., 1863.* Evidence, pp. 16, 19, 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Public Health, 3rd report, &c., pp. 102, 104, 105.*

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as a class, both men and women, represent a degenerated population, both physically and morally. They are, as a rule, stunted in growth, ill-shaped, and frequently ill-formed in the chest ; they become prematurely old, and are certainly short-lived ; they are phlegmatic and bloodless, and exhibit their debility of constitution by obstinate attacks of dyspepsia, and disorders of the liver and kidneys, and by rheumatism. But of all diseases they are especially prone to chest-disease, to pneumonia, phthisis, bronchitis, and asthma. One form would appear peculiar to them, and is known as potter's asthma, or potter's consumption. Scrofula attacking the glands, or bones, or other parts of the body, is a disease of two-thirds or more of the potters. . . . That the 'degenerescence' of the population of this district is not even greater than it is, is due to the constant recruiting from the adjacent country, and intermarriages with more healthy races." <sup>1</sup>

Mr. Charles Parsons, late house surgeon of the same institution, writes in a letter to Commissioner Longe, amongst other things : " I can only speak from personal observation and not from statistical data, but I do not hesitate to assert that my indignation has been aroused again and again at the sight of poor children whose health has been sacrificed to gratify the avarice of either parents or employers." He enumerates the causes of the diseases of the potters, and sums them

<sup>1</sup> *Child. Empl. Comm., I. Report*, p. 24.

up in the phrase, "long hours." The report of the Commission trusts that "a manufacture which has assumed so prominent a place in the whole world, will not long be subject to the remark that its great success is accompanied with the physical deterioration, widespread bodily suffering, and early death of the work-people . . . by whose labour and skill such great results have been achieved."<sup>1</sup> And all that holds of the potteries in England is true of those in Scotland.<sup>2</sup>

The manufacture of lucifer matches dates from 1833, from the discovery of the method of applying phosphorus to the match itself. Since 1845 this manufacture has rapidly developed in England, and has extended especially amongst the thickly populated parts of London as well as in Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Bristol, Norwich, Newcastle and Glasgow. With it has spread the form of lockjaw, which a Vienna physician in 1845 discovered to be a disease peculiar to lucifer-matchmakers. Half the workers are children under thirteen, and young persons under eighteen. The manufacture is on account of its unhealthiness and unpleasantness in such bad odour that only the most miserable part of the labouring class, half-starved widows and so forth, deliver up their children to it, "the ragged, half-starved, untaught children."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Children's Employment Commission*, pp. 22, and xi.

<sup>2</sup> *l. c.*, p. xlvii.

<sup>3</sup> *l. c.*, p. liv.

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Of the witnesses that Commissioner White examined (1863), 270 were under 18; 50 under 10, 10 only 8, and 5 only 6 years old. A range of the working day from 12 to 14 or 15 hours, night-labour, irregular meal times, meals for the most part taken in the very workrooms that are pestilent with phosphorus. Dante would have found the worst horrors of his *Inferno* surpassed in this manufacture.

In the manufacture of paper-hangings the coarser sorts are printed by machine; the finer by hand (block-printing). The most active business months are from the beginning of October to the end of April. During this time the work goes on fast and furious without intermission from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. or further into the night.

J. Leach deposes: "Last winter six out of nineteen girls were away from ill-health at one time from over-work. I have to bawl at them to keep them awake." W. Duffy: "I have seen when the children could none of them keep their eyes open for the work; indeed, none of us could." J. Lightbourne: "Am 13. . . . We worked last winter till 9 (evening), and the winter before till 10. I used to cry with sore feet every night last winter. G. Apsden: "That boy of mine . . . when he was 7 years old I used to carry him on my back to and fro through the snow, and he used to have 16 hours a day. . . . I have often knelt down to feed him as he stood by the machine,

for he could not leave it or stop." Smith, the managing partner of a Manchester factory: "We (he means his 'hands' who work for 'us') work on, with no stoppage for meals, so that the day's work of  $10\frac{1}{2}$  hours is finished by 4.30 p.m., and all after that is overtime."<sup>1</sup> (Does this Mr. Smith take no meals himself during  $10\frac{1}{2}$  hours?) "We (this same Smith) seldom leave off working before 6 p.m. (he means leave off the consumption of 'our' labour-power machines), so that we (iterum Crispinus) are really working overtime the whole year round. . . . For all these, children and adults alike (152 children and young persons and 140 adults), the average work for the last 18 months has been at the very least 7 days, 5 hours, or  $78\frac{1}{2}$  hours a week. For the six weeks ending May 2nd this year (1862), the average was higher—8 days or 84 hours a week." Still this same Mr. Smith, who is so extremely devoted to the *pluralis majestatis*, adds with a smile, "Machine work is not great." So the employers in the block-printing say: "Hand labour is more healthy than machine-work." On the whole,

<sup>1</sup> This is not to be taken in the same sense as our surplus labour-time. These gentlemen consider  $10\frac{1}{2}$  hours of labour as the normal working day, which includes of course the normal surplus-labour. After this begins "overtime" which is paid a little better. It will be seen later that the labour expended during the so-called normal day is paid below its value, so that the overtime is simply a capitalist trick in order to extort more surplus-labour, which it would still be, even if the labour-power expended during the normal working day were properly paid.



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manufacturers declare with indignation against the proposal "to stop the machines at least during meal times." A clause, says Mr. Otley, manager of a wall-paper factory in the Borough, "which allowed work between, say 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. . . . would suit us (!) very well, but the factory hours, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., are not suitable. Our machine is always stopped for dinner. (What generosity !) There is no waste of paper and colour to speak of. But," he adds sympathetically, "I can understand the loss of time not being liked." The report of the Commission opines with naïveté that the fear of some "leading firms" of losing time, *i.e.*, the time for appropriating the labour of others, and thence losing profit is not a sufficient reason for allowing children under 13, and young persons under 18, working 12 to 16 hours per day, to lose their dinner, nor for giving it to them as coal and water are supplied to the steam-engine, soap to wool, oil to the wheel—as merely auxiliary material to the instruments of labour, during the process of production itself.<sup>1</sup>

No branch of industry in England (we do not take into account the making of bread by machinery recently introduced) has preserved up to the present day a method of production so archaic, so—as we see from the poets of the Roman Empire—pre-Christian, as baking. But capital, as was said earlier,

<sup>1</sup> l. c., Evidence, pp. 123, 124, 125, 140 and 54.

is at first indifferent as to the technical character of the labour-process ; it begins by taking it just as it finds it.

The incredible adulteration of bread, especially in London, was first revealed by the House of Commons Committee "on the adulteration of articles of food" (1855-56), and Dr. Hassall's work, *Adulterations detected*.<sup>1</sup> The consequence of these revelations was the Act of August 6th, 1860, "for preventing the adulteration of articles of food and drink," an inoperative law, as it naturally shows the tenderest consideration for every free-trader who determines by the buying or selling of adulterated commodities<sup>2</sup> "to turn an honest penny." The Committee itself formulated more or less naïvely its conviction that free-trade meant essentially trade with adulterated, or as the English ingeniously put it, "sophisticated" goods. In fact this kind of sophistry knows better than Protagoras how to make white black, and black white, and better than the Eleatics how to

<sup>1</sup> Alum finely powdered, or mixed with salt, is a normal article of commerce bearing the significant name of "baker's stuff."

<sup>2</sup> Soot is a well-known and very energetic form of carbon, and forms a manure that capitalistic chimney-sweeps sell to English farmers. Now in 1862 the British jurymen had in a law-suit to decide whether soot, with which, unknown to the buyer, 90 per cent. of dust and sand are mixed, is genuine soot in the commercial sense or adulterated soot in the legal sense. The "amis du commerce" decided it to be genuine commercial soot, and non-suited the plaintiff farmer, who had in addition to pay the costs of the suit.

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demonstrate *ad oculos* that everything is only appearance.<sup>1</sup>

At all events the committee had directed the attention of the public to its "daily bread," and therefore to the baking trade. At the same time in public meetings and in petitions to Parliament rose the cry of the London journeymen bakers against their overwork, &c. The cry was so urgent that Mr. H. S. Tremenneere, also a member of the Commission of 1863 several times mentioned, was appointed Royal Commissioner of Inquiry. His report,<sup>2</sup> together with the evidence given, roused not the heart of the public but its stomach. Englishmen, always well up in the Bible, knew well enough that man, unless by elective grace a capitalist, or landlord, or sinecurist, is commanded to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, but they did not know that he had to eat daily in his bread a certain quantity of human perspiration mixed with

<sup>1</sup> The French chemist, Chevallier, in his treatise on the "sophistications" of commodities, enumerates for many of the 600 or more articles which he passes in review, 10, 20, 30 different methods of adulteration. He adds that he does not know all the methods, and does not mention all that he knows. He gives 6 kinds of adulteration of sugar, 9 of olive oil, 10 of butter, 12 of salt, 19 of milk, 20 of bread, 23 of brandy, 24 of meal, 28 of chocolate, 30 of wine, 32 of coffee, &c. Even God Almighty does not escape this fate. See Ronard de Card, on the falsifications of the materials of the Sacrament. (*De la falsification des substances sacramentelles*, Paris, 1856.)

<sup>2</sup> Report, &c., relating to the grievances complained of by the journeymen bakers, &c., London, 1862," and *Second Report, &c.*, London, 1863.

the discharge of abscesses, cobwebs, dead black-beetles, and putrid German yeast, without counting alum, sand, and other agreeable mineral ingredients. Without any regard to his holiness, Freetrade, the free baking-trade was therefore placed under the supervision of the State inspectors (Close of the Parliamentary session of 1863), and by the same Act of Parliament, work from 9 in the evening to 5 in the morning was forbidden for journeymen bakers under 18. The last clause speaks volumes as to the overwork in this old-fashioned, homely line of business.

“The work of a London journeyman baker begins, as a rule, at about eleven at night. At that hour he ‘makes the dough,’—a laborious process, which lasts from half-an-hour to three-quarters of an hour, according to the size of the batch or the labour bestowed upon it. He then lies down upon the kneading-board, which is also the covering of the trough in which the dough is ‘made’; and with a sack under him, and another rolled up as a pillow, he sleeps for about a couple of hours. He is then engaged in a rapid and continuous labour for about five hours—throwing out the dough, ‘scaling it off,’ moulding it, putting it into the oven, preparing and baking rolls and fancy bread, taking the batch bread out of the oven, and up into the shop, &c., &c. The temperature of a bakehouse ranges from about 75 to upwards of 90 degrees, and in the smaller bakehouses approximates usually to the higher

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rather than to the lower degree of heat. When the business of making the bread, rolls, &c., is over, that of its distribution begins, and a considerable proportion of the journeymen in the trade, after working hard in the manner described during the night, are upon their legs for many hours during the day, carrying baskets, or wheeling hand-carts, and sometimes again in the bakehouse, leaving off work at various hours between 1 and 6 p.m. according to the season of the year, or the amount and nature of their master's business ; while others are again engaged in the bakehouse in ' bringing out ' more batches until late in the afternoon.<sup>1</sup> . . . During what is called ' the London season ' the operatives belonging to the ' full-priced ' bakers at the West End of the town, generally begin work at 11 p.m., and are engaged in making the bread, with one or two short (sometimes very short) intervals of rest, up to 8 o'clock the next morning. They are then engaged all day long, up to 4, 5, 6, and as late as 7 o'clock in the evening carrying out bread, or sometimes in the afternoon in the bakehouse again, assisting in the biscuit-baking. They may have, after they have done their work, sometimes five or six, sometimes only four or five hours' sleep before they begin again. On Fridays they always begin sooner, some about ten o'clock, and continue in some cases, at work, either in making or delivering the bread up to

<sup>1</sup> l. c., *First Report, &c.*, p. vi.

8 p.m. on Saturday night, but more generally up to 4 or 5 o'clock, Sunday morning. On Sundays the men must attend twice or three times during the day for an hour or two to make preparations for the next day's bread. . . . The men employed by the underselling masters (who sell their bread under the 'full price,' and who, as already pointed out, comprise three-fourths of the London bakers) have not only to work on the average longer hours, but their work is almost entirely confined to the bakehouse. The underselling masters generally sell their bread . . . in the shop. If they send it out, which is not common, except as supplying chandlers' shops, they usually employ other hands for that purpose. It is not their practice to deliver bread from house to house. Towards the end of the week . . . the men begin on Thursday night at 10 o'clock, and continue on with only slight intermission until late on Saturday evening."<sup>1</sup>

Even the bourgeois intellect understands the position of the "underselling" masters. "The unpaid labour of the men was made the source whereby the competition was carried on."<sup>2</sup> And the "full-priced" baker denounces his underselling competitors to the Commission of Inquiry as thieves of foreign labour and adulterators. "They only exist now by first defraud-

<sup>1</sup> I. c., p. lxxi.

<sup>2</sup> George Read, *The History of Baking*, London, 1848, p. 16.

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ing the public, and next getting 18 hours' work out of their men for 12 hours' wages." <sup>1</sup>

The adulteration of bread and the formation of a class of bakers that sells the bread below the full price, date from the beginning of the 18th century, from the time when the corporate character of the trade was lost, and the capitalist in the form of the miller or flour-factor, rises behind the nominal master baker.<sup>2</sup> Thus was laid the foundation of capitalistic production in this trade, of the unlimited extension of the working day and of night labour, although the latter only since 1824 gained a serious footing, even in London.<sup>3</sup>

After what has just been said, it will be understood that the Report of the Commission classes journeymen bakers among the short-lived labourers, who, having by good luck escaped the normal decimation of the children of the working-class, rarely reach the age of 42. Nevertheless, the baking trade is always overwhelmed with applicants. The sources of the supply

<sup>1</sup> *Report (First), &c.* Evidence of the "full-priced" baker Cheeseman, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> George Read, l. c. At the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries the factors (agents) that crowded into every possible trade were still denounced as "public nuisances." Thus the Grand Jury at the quarter session of the Justices of the Peace for the County of Somerset, addressed a presentment to the Lower House which, among other things, states, "that these factors of Blackwell Hall are a Public Nuisance and Prejudice to the Clothing Trade, and ought to be put down as a Nuisance."—*The case of our English Wool, &c.*, London, 1685, pp. 6, 7.

<sup>3</sup> *First Report, &c.*

of these labour-powers to London are Scotland, the western agricultural districts of England, and Germany.

In the years 1858-60, the journeymen bakers in Ireland organized at their own expense great meetings to agitate against night and Sunday work. The public—*e.g.*, at the Dublin meeting in May, 1860—took their part with Irish warmth. As result of this movement, day labour alone was successfully established in Wexford, Kilkenny, Clonmel, Waterford, &c. “In Limerick, where the grievances of the journeymen are demonstrated to be excessive, the movement has been defeated by the opposition of the master bakers, the miller bakers being the greatest opponents. The example of Limerick led to a retrogression in Ennis and Tipperary. In Cork, where the strongest possible demonstration of feeling took place, the masters, by exercising their power of turning the men out of employment, have defeated the movement. In Dublin, the master bakers have offered the most determined opposition to the movement, and by discountenancing as much as possible the journeymen promoting it, have succeeded in leading the men into acquiescence in Sunday work and night work, contrary to the convictions of the men.”<sup>1</sup>

The Committee of the English Government, which Government, in Ireland, is armed to the teeth, and generally knows how to show it, remonstrates in mild,

<sup>1</sup> *Report of Committee on the Baking Trade in Ireland for 1861.*



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though funereal, tones with the implacable master bakers of Dublin, Limerick, Cork, &c. : "The Committee believe that the hours of labour are limited by natural laws, which cannot be violated with impunity. That for master bakers to induce their workmen, by the fear of losing employment, to violate their religious convictions and their better feelings, to disobey the laws of the land, and to disregard public opinion (this all refers to Sunday labour), is calculated to provoke ill-feeling between workmen and masters, . . . and affords an example dangerous to religion, morality, and social order. . . . The Committee believe that any constant work beyond 12 hours a day encroaches on the domestic and private life of the working man, and so leads to disastrous moral results, interfering with each man's home, and the discharge of his family duties as a son, a brother, a husband, a father. That work beyond 12 hours has a tendency to undermine the health of the working man, and so leads to premature old age and death, to the great injury of families of working men, thus deprived of the care and support of the head of the family when most required."<sup>1</sup>

So far, we have dealt with Ireland. On the other side of the channel, in Scotland, the agricultural labourer, the ploughman, protests against his 13-14 hours' work in the most inclement climate, with 4

<sup>1</sup> l. c.

hours' additional work on Sunday (in this land of Sabbatarians !),<sup>1</sup> whilst, at the same time, three railway men are standing before a London coroner's jury—a guard, an engine-driver, a signalman. A tremendous railway accident has hurried hundreds of passengers into another world. The negligence of the employés is the cause of the misfortune. They declare with one voice before the jury that ten or twelve years before, their labour only lasted eight hours a day. During the last five or six years it had been screwed up to 14, 18, and 20 hours, and under a specially severe pressure of holiday-makers, at times of excursion trains, it often lasted for 40 or 50 hours without a break. They were ordinary men, not Cyclops. At a certain point their labour-power failed. Torpor seized them. Their brain ceased to think, their eyes to see. The thoroughly "respectable" British jury-

<sup>1</sup> Public meeting of agricultural labourers at Lasswade, near Edinburgh, January 5th, 1866. (See *Workman's Advocate*, January 13th, 1866.) The formation since the close of 1865 of a Trades Union among the agricultural labourers at first in Scotland is a historic event. In one of the most oppressed agricultural districts of England, Buckinghamshire, the labourers, in March, 1867, made a great strike for the raising of their weekly wage from 9-10 shillings to 12 shillings. (It will be seen from the preceding passage that the movement of the English agricultural proletariat, entirely crushed since the suppression of its violent manifestations after 1830, and especially since the introduction of the new Poor Laws, begins again in the sixties, until it becomes finally epoch-making in 1872. I return to this in the 2nd volume, as well as to the blue books that have appeared since 1867 on the position of the English land labourers. Addendum to the 3rd ed.)

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men answered by a verdict that sent them to the next assizes on a charge of manslaughter, and, in a gentle "rider" to their verdict, expressed the pious hope that the capitalistic magnates of the railways would, in future, be more extravagant in the purchase of a sufficient quantity of labour-power, and more "abstemious," more "self-denying," more "thrifty," in the draining of paid labour-power.<sup>1</sup>

From the motley crowd of labourers of all callings,

<sup>1</sup> *Reynolds' Newspaper*, January, 1866.—Every week this same paper has, under the sensational headings, "Fearful and fatal accidents," "Appalling tragedies," &c., a whole list of fresh railway catastrophes. On these an employé on the North Staffordshire line comments: "Every one knows the consequences that may occur if the driver and fireman of a locomotive engine are not continually on the look-out. How can that be expected from a man who has been at such work for 29 or 30 hours, exposed to the weather, and without rest. The following is an example which is of very frequent occurrence:—One fireman commenced work on the Monday morning at a very early hour. When he had finished what is called a day's work, he had been on duty 14 hours 50 minutes. Before he had time to get his tea, he was again called on for duty. . . . The next time he finished he had been on duty 14 hours 25 minutes, making a total of 29 hours 15 minutes without intermission. The rest of the week's work was made up as follows:—Wednesday, 15 hours; Thursday, 15 hours 35 minutes; Friday, 14½ hours; Saturday, 14 hours 10 minutes, making a total for the week of 88 hours 40 minutes. Now, sir, fancy his astonishment on being paid 6¼ days for the whole. Thinking it was a mistake, he applied to the timekeeper, . . . and inquired what they considered a day's work, and was told 13 hours for a goods man (*i.e.*, 78 hours). . . . He then asked for what he had made over and above the 78 hours per week, but was refused. However, he was at last told they would give him another quarter, *i.e.*, 10d." (*l. c.*, 4th February, 1866).

ages, sexes, that press on us more busily than the souls of the slain on Ulysses, on whom—without referring to the blue books under their arms—we see at a glance the mark of overwork, let us take two more figures whose striking contrast proves that before capital all men are alike—a milliner and a blacksmith.

In the last week of June, 1863, all the London daily papers published a paragraph with the “sensational” heading, “Death from simple overwork.” It dealt with the death of the milliner, Mary Anne Walkley, 20 years of age, employed in a highly-respectable dressmaking establishment, exploited by a lady with the pleasant name of Elise. The old, often-told story,<sup>1</sup> was once more recounted. This girl worked, on an average, 16½ hours, during the season often 30 hours, without a break, whilst her failing labour-power was revived by occasional supplies of sherry, port, or coffee. It was just now the height of the season. It was necessary to conjure up in the twinkling of an eye the gorgeous dresses for the noble ladies bidden to the ball in honour of the newly-imported Princess of Wales. Mary Anne Walkley had worked without intermission for 26½ hours, with 60 other girls, 30 in one room, that only afforded ⅓ of the cubic feet of air required for them. At night, they slept in pairs in one of the stifling holes into which the bedroom

<sup>1</sup> Cf. F. Engels, l. c., pp. 253, 254.

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was divided by partitions of board.<sup>1</sup> And this was one of the best millinery establishments in London. Mary Anne Walkley fell ill on the Friday, died on Sunday, without, to the astonishment of Madame Elise, having previously completed the work in hand. The doctor, Mr. Keys, called too late to the death-bed, duly bore witness before the coroner's jury that "Mary Anne Walkley had died from long hours of work in an overcrowded workroom, and a too small and badly-ventilated bedroom." In order to

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Letheby, Consulting Physician of the Board of Health, declared : "The minimum of air for each adult ought to be in a sleeping-room 300, and in a dwelling-room 500 cubic feet." Dr. Richardson, Senior Physician to one of the London Hospitals : "With needlewomen of all kinds, including milliners, dressmakers, and ordinary sempstresses, there are three miseries—overwork, deficient air, and either deficient food or deficient digestion. . . . Needlework, in the main, . . . is infinitely better adapted to women than to men. But the mischiefs of the trade, in the metropolis especially, are that it is monopolized by some twenty-six capitalists, who, under the advantages that spring from capital, can bring in capital to force economy out of labour. This power tells throughout the whole class. If a dressmaker can get a little circle of customers, such is the competition that, in her home, she must work to the death to hold together, and this same overwork she must of necessity inflict on any who may assist her. If she fail, or do not try independently, she must join an establishment, where her labour is not less, but where her money is safe. Placed thus, she becomes a mere slave, tossed about with the variations of society. Now at home, in one room, starving, or near to it, then engaged 15, 16, aye, even 18 hours out of the 24, in an air that is scarcely tolerable, and on food which, even if it be good, cannot be digested in the absence of pure air. On these victims, consumption, which is purely a disease of bad air, feeds." Dr. Richardson : "Work and Overwork," in *Social Science Review*, 18th July, 1863.

give the doctor a lesson in good manners, the coroner's jury thereupon brought in a verdict that "the deceased had died of apoplexy, but there was reason to fear that her death had been accelerated by overwork in an overcrowded workroom, &c." "Our white slaves," cried the *Morning Star*, the organ of the free-traders, Cobden and Bright, "our white slaves, who are toiled into the grave, for the most part silently pine and die."<sup>1</sup>

"It is not in dressmakers' rooms that working to death is the order of the day, but in a thousand other places; in every place I had almost said, where 'a

<sup>1</sup> *Morning Star*, 23rd June, 1863.—The *Times* made use of the circumstance to defend the American slave-owners against Bright, &c. "Very many of us think," says a leader of July 2nd, 1863, "that, while we work our own young women to death, using the scourge of starvation, instead of the crack of the whip, as the instrument of compulsion, we have scarcely a right to hound on fire and slaughter against families who were born slave-owners, and who, at least, feed their slaves well, and work them lightly." In the same manner, the *Standard*, a Tory organ, fell foul of the Rev. Newman Hall: He excommunicated the slave-owners, but prays with the fine folk who, without remorse, make the omnibus drivers and conductors of London, &c., work 16 hours a day for the wages of a dog." Finally, spake the oracle, Thomas Carlyle, of whom I wrote, in 1850, "Zum Tenfel ist der Genius, der Kultus ist geblieben." In a short parable, he reduces the one great event of contemporary history, the American civil war, to this level, that the Peter of the North wants to break the head of the Paul of the South with all his might, because the Peter of the North hires his labour by the day, and the Paul of the South hires his by the life.—(*Macmillan's Magazine*, "Ilias Americana in nuce," August, 1863.) Thus, the bubble of Tory sympathy for the urban workers—by no means for the rural—has burst at last. The sum of all is—slavery!

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thriving business ' has to be done. . . . We will take the blacksmith as a type. If the poets were true, there is no man so hearty, so merry, as the blacksmith ; he rises early and strikes his sparks before the sun ; he eats and drinks and sleeps as no other man. Working in moderation, he is, in fact, in one of the best of human positions, physically speaking. But we follow him into the city or town, and we see the stress of work on that strong man, and what then is his position in the death-rate of his country. In Marylebone, blacksmiths die at the rate of 31 per thousand per annum, or 11 above the mean of the male adults of the country in its entirety. The occupation, instinctive almost as a portion of human art, unobjectionable as a branch of human industry, is made by mere excess of work, the destroyer of the man. He can strike so many blows per day, walk so many steps, breathe so many breaths, produce so much work, and live an average, say of fifty years ; he is made to strike so many more blows, to walk so many more steps, to breathe so many more breaths per day, and to increase altogether a fourth of his life. He meets the effort ; the result is, that producing for a limited time a fourth more work, he dies at 37 for 50." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Richardson, l. c.

SECTION 4.—DAY AND NIGHT WORK. THE RELAY  
SYSTEM

Constant capital, the means of production, considered from the standpoint of the creation of surplus-value, only exists to absorb labour, and with every drop of labour a proportional quantity of surplus-labour. While they fail to do this, their mere existence causes a relative loss to the capitalist, for they represent during the time they lie fallow, a useless advance of capital. And this loss becomes positive and absolute as soon as the intermission of their employment necessitates additional outlay at the recommencement of work. The prolongation of the working day beyond the limits of the natural day, into the night, only acts as a palliative. It quenches only in a slight degree the vampire thirst for the living blood of labour. To appropriate labour during all the 24 hours of the day is, therefore, the inherent tendency of capitalist production. But as it is physically impossible to exploit the same individual labour-power constantly during the night as well as the day, to overcome this physical hindrance, an alternation becomes necessary between the workpeople whose powers are exhausted by day, and those who are used up by night. This alternation may be effected in various ways ; *e.g.*, it may be so arranged that part of the workers are one



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week employed on day work, the next week on night work. It is well-known that this relay system, this alternation of two sets of workers, held full sway in the full-blooded youth-time of the English cotton manufacture, and that at the present time it still flourishes, among others, in the cotton spinning of the Moscow district. This 24 hours' process of production exists to-day as a system in many of the branches of industry of Great Britain that are still "free," in the blast-furnaces, forges, plate-rolling mills, and other metallurgical establishments in England, Wales, and Scotland. The working time here includes, besides the 24 hours of the 6 working days, a great part also of the 24 hours of Sunday. The workers consist of men and women, adults and children of both sexes. The ages of the children and young persons run through all intermediate grades, from 8 (in some cases from 6) to 18.<sup>1</sup>

In some branches of industry, the girls and women work through the night together with the males.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Children's Employment Commission, Third Report*, London, 1864, pp. iv., v., vi.

<sup>2</sup> "Both in Staffordshire and in South Wales young girls and women are employed on the pit banks, and on the coke heaps, not only by day but also by night. This practice has been often noticed in Reports presented to Parliament, as being attended with great and notorious evils. These females employed with the men, hardly distinguished from them in their dress, and begrimed with dirt and smoke, are exposed to the deterioration of character, arising from the loss of self-respect, which can hardly fail to follow from their unfeminine occupation."—(l. c., 194, p. xxvi. Cf. *Fourth Report* (1865), 61, p. xiii.) It is the same in glass-works.

Placing on one side the generally injurious influence of night-labour,<sup>1</sup> the duration of the process of production, unbroken during the 24 hours, offers very welcome opportunities of exceeding the limits of the normal working day, *e.g.*, in the branches of industry already mentioned, which are of an exceedingly fatiguing nature ; the official working day means for each worker usually 12 hours by night or day. But the overwork beyond this amount is in many cases,

<sup>1</sup> A steel manufacturer who employs children on night-labour remarked : " It seems but natural that boys who work at night cannot sleep and get proper rest by day, but will be running about." —(l. c., *Fourth Report*, 63, p. xiii.) On the importance of sunlight for the maintenance and growth of the body, a physician writes : " Light also acts upon the tissues of the body directly in hardening them and supporting their elasticity. The muscles of animals, when they are deprived of a proper amount of light, become soft and inelastic, the nervous power loses its tone from defective stimulation, and the elaboration of all growth seems to be perverted. . . . In the case of children, constant access to plenty of light during the day, and to the direct rays of the sun for a part of it, is most essential to health. Light assists in the elaboration of good plastic blood, and hardens the fibre after it has been laid down. It also acts as a stimulus upon the organs of sight, and by this means brings about more activity in the various cerebral functions." Dr. W. Strange, Senior Physician of the Worcester General Hospital, from whose work on *Health* (1864) this passage is taken, writes in a letter to Mr. White, one of the commissioners : " I have had opportunities formerly, when in Lancashire, of observing the effects of night-work upon children, and I have no hesitation in saying, contrary to what some employers were fond of asserting, those children who were subjected to it soon suffered in their health."—(l. c., 284, p. 55.) That such a question should furnish the material of serious controversy, shows plainly how capitalist production acts on the brain-functions of capitalists and their retainers.

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to use the words of the English official report, "truly fearful."<sup>1</sup>

"It is impossible," the report continues, "for any mind to realize the amount of work described in the following passages as being performed by boys of from 9 to 12 years of age . . . without coming irresistibly to the conclusion that such abuses of the power of parents and of employers can no longer be allowed to exist."<sup>2</sup>

"The practice of boys working at all by day and night turns, either in the usual course of things, or at pressing times, seems inevitably to open the door to their not unfrequently working unduly long hours. These hours are, indeed, in some cases, not only cruelly but even incredibly long for children. Amongst a number of boys it will, of course, not unfrequently happen that one or more are from some cause absent. When this happens, their place is made up by one or more boys, who work in the other turn. That this is a well understood system is plain . . . from the answer of the manager of some large rolling-mills, who, when I asked him how the place of the boys, absent from their turn was made up, 'I daresay, sir, you know that as well as I do,' and admitted the fact."<sup>3</sup>

"At a rolling-mill where the proper hours were

<sup>1</sup> l. c., 57, p. xii.

<sup>2</sup> l. c., *Fourth Report* (1865), 58, p. xii.

<sup>3</sup> l. c.

from 6 a.m. to 5½ p.m., a boy worked about four nights every week till 8½ p.m. at least . . . and this for six months. Another, at 9 years old, sometimes made three 12-hour shifts running, and, when 10, has made two days and two nights running." A third, "now 10 . . . worked from 6 a.m. till 12 p.m. three nights, and till 9 p.m. the other nights." "Another, now 13, . . . worked from 6 p.m. till 12 noon next day, for a week together, and sometimes for three shifts together, *e.g.*, from Monday morning till Tuesday night." "Another, now 12, has worked in an iron foundry at Stavely from 6 a.m. till 12 p.m. for a fortnight on end; could not do it any more." "George Allinsworth, age 9, came here as cellar-boy last Friday; next morning we had to begin at 3, so I stopped here all night. Live five miles off. Slept on the floor of the furnace, overhead, with an apron under me, and a bit of a jacket over me. The two other days I have been here at 6 a.m. Aye! it is hot in here. Before I came here I was nearly a year at the same work at some works in the country. Began there, too, at 3 on Saturday morning—always did, but was very gain [near] home, and could sleep at home. Other days I began at 6 in the morning, and gi'en over at 6 or 7 in the evening," &c.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> l. c., p. xiii. The degree of culture of these "labour-powers" must naturally be such as appears in the following dialogues with one of the commissioners: Jeremiah Haynes, age 12—"Four times

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Let us now hear how capital itself regards this 24 hours' system. The extreme forms of the system, its abuse in the "cruel and incredible" extension of the working day are naturally passed over in silence. Capital only speaks of the system in its "normal" form.

Messrs. Naylor & Vickers, steel manufacturers, who employ between 600 and 700 persons, among whom only 10 per cent. are under 18, and of those, only 20 boys under 18 work in night sets, thus express them-

four is 8 ; 4 fours are 16. A king is him that has all the money and gold. We have a King (told it is a Queen), they call her the Princess Alexandra. Told that she married the Queen's son. The Queen's son is the Princess Alexandra. A Princess is a man." William Turner, age 12—"Don't live in England. Think it is a country, but didn't know before." John Morris, age 14—"Have heard say that God made the world, and that all the people was drowned but one ; heard say that one was a little bird." William Smith, age 15—"God made man, man made woman." Edward Taylor, age 15—"Do not know of London." Henry Matthewman, age 17—"Had been to chapel, but missed a good many times lately. One name that they preached about was Jesus Christ, but I cannot say any others, and I cannot tell anything about him. He was not killed, but died like other people. He was not the same as other people in some ways, because he was religious in some ways, and others isn't."—(l. c., p. xv.) "The devil is a good person. I don't know where he lives." "Christ was a wicked man." "This girl spelt God as dog, and did not know the name of the queen."—(*Ch. Employment Comm., V. Report, 1866, p. 55, n. 278.*) The same system obtains in the glass and paper works as in the metallurgical, already cited. In the paper factories, where the paper is made by machinery, night-work is the rule for all processes, except rag-sorting. In some cases night-work, by relays, is carried on incessantly through the whole week, usually from Sunday night

selves : “ The boys do not suffer from the heat. The temperature is probably from 86° to 90°. . . . At the forges and in the rolling-mills the hands work night and day, in relays, but all the other parts of the work are day-work, *i.e.*, from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. In the forge the hours are from 12 to 12. Some of the hands always work in the night, without any alternation of day and night work. . . . We do not find any difference in the health of those who work regularly by night and those who work by day, and probably people can sleep better if they have the same period

until midnight of the following Saturday. Those who are on day-work work 5 days of 12, and 1 day of 18 hours; those on night-work 5 nights of 12, and 1 of 6 hours in each week. In other cases each set works 24 hours consecutively on alternate days, one set working 6 hours on Monday, and 18 on Saturday to make up the 24 hours. In other cases an intermediate system prevails, by which all employed on the paper-making machinery work 15 or 16 hours every day in the week. This system, says Commissioner Lord, “ seems to combine all the evils of both the 12 hours’ and the 24 hours’ relays.” Children under 13, young persons under 18, and women, work under this night system. Sometimes under the 12 hours’ system they are obliged, on account of the non-appearance of those that ought to relieve them, to work a double turn of 24 hours. The evidence proves that boys and girls very often work overtime, which, not unfrequently, extends to 24 or even 36 hours of uninterrupted toil. In the continuous and unvarying process of glazing are found girls of 12 who work the whole month 14 hours a day, “ without any regular relief or cessation beyond 2 or, at most, 3 breaks of half an hour each for meals.” In some mills, where regular night-work has been entirely given up, overwork goes on to a terrible extent, “ and that often in the dirtiest, and in the hottest, and in the most monotonous of the various processes.”—(*Ch. Employment Comm., Report IV.*, 1865, pp. xxxviii. and xxxix.)

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of rest than if it is changed. . . . About 20 of the boys under the age of 18 work in the night sets. . . . We could not well do without lads under 18 working by night. The objection would be the increase in the cost of production. . . . Skilled hands and the heads in every department are difficult to get, but of lads we could get any number. . . . But from the small proportion of boys that we employ, the subject (*i.e.*, of restrictions on night-work) is of little importance or interest to us.”<sup>1</sup>

Mr. J. Ellis, one of the firm of Messrs. John Brown & Co., steel and iron works, employing about 3,000 men and boys, part of whose operations, namely, iron and heavier steel work, goes on night and day by relays, states “that in the heavier steel work one or two boys are employed to a score or two men.” Their concern employs upwards of 500 boys under 18, of whom about  $\frac{1}{3}$  or 170 are under the age of 13. With reference to the proposed alteration of the law, Mr. Ellis says : “I do not think it would be very objectionable to require that no person under the age of 18 should work more than 12 hours in the 24. But we do not think that any line could be drawn over the age of 12, at which boys could be dispensed with for night-work. But we would sooner be prevented from employing boys under the age of 13, or even so high as 14, at all, than not be allowed to employ boys that we do

<sup>1</sup> *Fourth Report, &c.*, 1865, 79, p. xvi.

have at night. Those boys who work in the day sets must take their turn in the night sets also, because the men could not work in the night sets only ; it would ruin their health. . . . We think, however, that night-work in alternate weeks is no harm. (Messrs. Naylor & Vickers, on the other hand, in conformity with the interest of their business, considered that periodically changed night-labour might possibly do more harm than continual night-labour.) We find the men who do it, as well as the others who do other work only by day. . . . Our objections to not allowing boys under 18 to work at night, would be on account of the increase of expense, but this is the only reason. (What cynical naïveté !) We think that the increase would be more than the trade, with due regard to its being successfully carried out, could fairly bear. (What mealy-mouthed phraseology !) Labour is scarce here, and might fall short if there were such a regulation.” (*i.e.*, Ellis Brown & Co. might fall into the fatal perplexity of being obliged to pay labour-power its full value.)<sup>1</sup>

The “Cyclops Steel and Iron Works,” of Messrs. Cammell & Co., are conducted on the same large scale as those of the above-mentioned John Brown & Co. The managing director had handed in his evidence to the Government Commissioner, Mr. White, in writing. Later he found it convenient to

<sup>1</sup> l. c., 80, p. xvi.



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suppress the MS. when it had been returned to him for revision. Mr. White, however, has a good memory. He remembered quite clearly that for the Messrs. Cyclops the forbidding of the night-labour of children and young persons "would be impossible, it would be tantamount to stopping their works," and yet their business employs little more than 6 % of boys under 18, and less than 1 % under 13.<sup>1</sup>

On the same subject Mr. E. F. Sanderson, of the firm of Sanderson, Bros., & Co., steel rolling-mills and forges, Attercliffe, says : "Great difficulty would be caused by preventing boys under 18 from working at night. The chief would be the increase of cost from employing men instead of boys. I cannot say what this would be, but probably it would not be enough to enable the manufacturers to raise the price of steel, and consequently it would fall on them, as of course the men (what queer-headed folk !) would refuse to pay it." Mr. Sanderson does not know how much he pays the children, but "perhaps the younger boys get from 4s. to 5s. a week. . . . The boys' work is of a kind for which the strength of the boys is generally ('generally,' of course not always) quite sufficient, and consequently there would be no gain in the greater strength of the men to counterbalance the loss, or it would be only in the few cases in which the metal is heavy. The men would not like so well not

<sup>1</sup> l. c., 82, p. xvii.

to have boys under them, as men would be less obedient. Besides, boys must begin young to learn the trade. Leaving day-work alone open to boys would not answer this purpose." And why not? Why could not boys learn their handicraft in the day-time? Your reason? "Owing to the men working days and nights in alternate weeks, the men would be separated half the time from their boys, and would lose half the profit which they make from them. The training which they give to an apprentice is considered as part of the return for the boys' labour, and thus enables the men to get it at a cheaper rate. Each man would want half of this profit." In other words, Messrs. Sanderson would have to pay part of the wages of the adult men out of their own pockets instead of by the night-work of the boys. Messrs. Sanderson's profit would thus fall to some extent, and this is the good Sandersonian reason why boys cannot learn their handicraft in the day.<sup>1</sup> In addition to this, it would throw night-labour on those who worked instead of the boys, which they would not be able to stand. The difficulties in fact would be so great that they would very likely lead to the giving up of night-work altogether, and "as far as the work

<sup>1</sup> In our reflecting and reasoning age a man is not worth much who cannot give a good reason for everything, no matter how bad or how crazy. Everything in the world that has been done wrong has been done wrong for the very best of reasons.—(Hegel, l. c., p. 249.)

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itself is concerned," says E. F. Sanderson, "this would suit as well, but—" But Messrs. Sanderson have something else to make besides steel. Steel-making is simply a pretext for surplus-value making. The smelting furnaces, rolling-mills, &c., the buildings, machinery, iron, coal, &c., have something more to do than transform themselves into steel. They are there to absorb surplus-labour, and naturally absorb more in 24 hours than in 12. In fact they give, by grace of God and law, the Sandersons a cheque on the working-time of a certain number of hands for all the 24 hours of the day, and they lose their character as capital, are therefore a pure loss for the Sandersons, as soon as their function of absorbing labour is interrupted. "But then there would be the loss from so much expensive machinery, lying idle half the time, and to get through the amount of work which we are able to do on the present system, we should have to double our premises and plant, which would double the outlay." But why should these Sandersons pretend to a privilege not enjoyed by the other capitalists who only work during the day, and whose buildings, machinery, raw material, therefore lie "idle" during the night? E. F. Sanderson answers in the name of all the Sandersons: "It is true that there is this loss from machinery lying idle in those manufactories in which work only goes on by day. But the use of furnaces would involve a further loss in our case.

If they were kept up there would be a waste of fuel (instead of, as now, a waste of the living substance of the workers), and if they were not, there would be loss of time in laying the fires and getting the heat up (whilst the loss of sleeping time, even to children of 8 is a gain of working-time for the Sanderson tribe), and the furnaces themselves would suffer from the changes of temperature." (Whilst those same furnaces suffer nothing from the day and night change of labour.) <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *l. c.*, 85, p. xvii. To similar tender scruples of the glass manufacturers that regular meal times for the children are impossible because as a consequence a certain quantity of heat, radiated by the furnaces, would be "a pure loss" or "wasted," Commissioner White makes answer. His answer is unlike that of Ure, Senior, &c., and their puny German plagiarists à la Roscher who are touched by the "abstinence," "self-denial," "saving," of the capitalists in the expenditure of their gold, and by their Timur-Tamerlanish prodigality of human life! "A certain amount of heat beyond what is usual at present might also be going to waste, if meal times were secured in these cases, but it seems likely not equal in money-value to the waste of animal power now going on in glass-houses throughout the kingdom from growing boys not having enough quiet time to eat their meals at ease, with a little rest afterwards for digestion."—(*l. c.*, p. xlv.) And this in the year of progress 1865! Without considering the expenditure of strength in lifting and carrying, such a child, in the sheds where bottle and flint glass are made, walks during the performance of his work 15–20 miles in every 6 hours! And the work often lasts 14 or 15 hours! In many of these glass works, as in the Moscow spinning mills, the system of 6 hours' relays is in force. "During the working part of the week six hours is the utmost unbroken period ever attained at any one time for rest, and out of this has to come the time spent in coming and going to and from work, washing, dressing, and meals,

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### SECTION 5.—THE STRUGGLE FOR A NORMAL WORKING DAY. COMPULSORY LAWS FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE WORKING DAY FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE 14TH TO THE END OF THE 17TH CENTURY

“What is a working day? What is the length of time during which capital may consume the labour-power whose daily value it buys? How far may the working day be extended beyond the working-time necessary for the reproduction of labour-power itself?” It has been seen that to these questions capital replies: the working day contains the full 24 hours, with the deduction of the few hours of repose without which labour-power absolutely refuses its services again. Hence it is self-evident that the labourer is

leaving a very short period indeed for rest, and none for fresh air and play, unless at the expense of the sleep necessary for young boys, especially at such hot and fatiguing work. . . . Even the short sleep is obviously liable to be broken by a boy having to wake himself if it is night, or by the noise, if it is day.” Mr. White gives cases where a boy worked 36 consecutive hours; others where boys of 12 drudged on until 2 in the morning, and then slept in the works till 5 a.m. (3 hours!) only to resume their work. “The amount of work,” say Tremenheere and Tufnell, who drafted the general report, “done by boys, youths, girls, and women, in the course of their daily or nightly spell of labour, is certainly extraordinary.”—(l. c., xliii. and xliv.) Meanwhile, late by night perhaps, self-denying Mr. Glass-Capital, primed with port-wine, reels out of his club homeward droning out idiotically, “Britons never, never shall be slaves!”

nothing else, his whole life through, than labour-power, that therefore all his disposable time is by nature and law labour-time, to be devoted to the self-expansion of capital. Time for education, for intellectual development, for the fulfilling of social functions and for social intercourse, for the free play of his bodily and mental activity, even the rest time of Sunday (and that in a country of Sabbatarians !)<sup>1</sup> —moonshine ! But in its blind unrestrainable passion, its were-wolf hunger for surplus-labour, capital oversteps not only the moral, but even the merely physical maximum bounds of the working day. It usurps the time for growth, development, and healthy maintenance of the body. It steals the time required for the consumption of fresh air and sunlight. It higgles over

<sup>1</sup> In England even now occasionally in rural districts a labourer is condemned to imprisonment for desecrating the Sabbath, by working in his front garden. The same labourer is punished for breach of contract if he remains away from his metal, paper, or glass works on the Sunday, even if it be from a religious whim. The orthodox Parliament will hear nothing of Sabbath-breaking if it occurs in the process of expanding capital. A memorial (August 1863), in which the London day-labourers in fish and poultry shops asked for the abolition of Sunday labour, states that their work lasts for the first 6 days of the week on an average 15 hours a-day, and on Sunday 8-10 hours. From this same memorial we learn also that the delicate gourmands among the aristocratic hypocrites of Exeter Hall, especially encourage this "Sunday labour." These "holy ones," so zealous in *cute curunda*, show their Christianity by the humility with which they bear the overwork, the privations, and the hunger of others. *Obsequium ventris istis (the labourers) perniciosius est.*

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a meal-time, incorporating it where possible with the process of production itself, so that food is given to the labourer as to a mere means of production, as coal is supplied to the boiler, grease and oil to the machinery. It reduces the sound sleep needed for the restoration, reparation, refreshment of the bodily powers to just so many hours of torpor as the revival of an organism, absolutely exhausted, renders essential. It is not the normal maintenance of the labour-power which is to determine the limits of the working day ; it is the greatest possible daily expenditure of labour-power, no matter how diseased, compulsory, and painful it may be, which is to determine the limits of the labourers' period of repose. Capital cares nothing for the length of life of labour-power. All that concerns it is simply and solely the maximum of labour-power, that can be rendered fluent in a working day. It attains this end by shortening the extent of the labourer's life, as a greedy farmer snatches increased produce from the soil by robbing it of its fertility.

The capitalistic mode of production (essentially the production of surplus-value, the absorption of surplus-labour), produces thus, with the extension of the working day, not only the deterioration of human labour-power by robbing it of its normal, moral and physical, conditions of development and function. It produces also the premature exhaustion and death of

this labour-power itself.<sup>1</sup> It extends the labourer's time of production during a given period by shortening his actual lifetime.

But the value of the labour-power includes the value of the commodities necessary for the reproduction of the worker, or for the keeping up of the working class. If then the unnatural extension of the working day, that capital necessarily strives after in its unmeasured passion for self-expansion, shortens the length of life of the individual labourer, and therefore the duration of his labour-power, the forces used up have to be replaced at a more rapid rate and the sum of the expenses for the reproduction of labour-power will be greater ; just as in a machine the part of its value to be reproduced every day is greater the more rapidly the machine is worn out. It would seem therefore that the interest of capital itself points in the direction of a normal working day.

The slave-owner buys his labourer as he buys his horse. If he loses his slave, he loses capital that can only be restored by new outlay in the slave-mart. But "the rice-grounds of Georgia, or the swamps of the Mississippi may be fatally injurious to the human constitution ; but the waste of human life which the

<sup>1</sup> "We have given in our previous reports the statements of several experienced manufacturers to the effect that over-hours . . . certainly tend prematurely to exhaust the working power of the men."—(l. c., 64, p. xiii.)



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cultivation of these districts necessitates, is not so great that it cannot be repaired from the teeming preserves of Virginia and Kentucky. Considerations of economy, moreover, which, under a natural system, afford some security for humane treatment by identifying the master's interest with the slave's preservation, when once trading in slaves is practised, become reasons for racking to the uttermost the toil of the slave ; for, when his place can at once be supplied from foreign preserves, the duration of his life becomes a matter of less moment than its productiveness while it lasts. It is accordingly a maxim of slave management, in slave-importing countries, that the most effective economy is that which takes out of the human chattel in the shortest space of time the utmost amount of exertion it is capable of putting forth. It is in tropical culture, where annual profits often equal the whole capital of plantations, that negro life is most recklessly sacrificed. It is the agriculture of the West Indies, which has been for centuries prolific of fabulous wealth, that has engulfed millions of the African race. It is in Cuba, at this day, whose revenues are reckoned by millions, and whose planters are princes, that we see in the servile class, the coarsest fare, the most exhausting and unremitting toil, and even the absolute destruction of a portion of its numbers every year." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cairnes, *The Slave Power*, pp. 110, 111.

*Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur.* For slave-trade read labour-market, for Kentucky and Virginia, Ireland and the agricultural districts of England, Scotland, and Wales, for Africa, Germany. We heard how overwork thinned the ranks of the bakers in London. Nevertheless, the London labour-market is always overstocked with German and other candidates for death in the bakeries. Pottery, as we saw, is one of the shortest-lived industries. Is there any want therefore of potters? Josiah Wedgwood, the inventor of modern pottery, himself originally a common workman, said in 1785 before the House of Commons that the whole trade employed from 15,000 to 20,000 people.<sup>1</sup> In the year 1861 the population alone of the town centres of this industry in Great Britain numbered 101,302. "The cotton trade has existed for ninety years. . . . It has existed for three generations of the English race, and I believe I may safely say that during that period it has destroyed nine generations of factory operatives."<sup>2</sup>

No doubt in certain epochs of feverish activity the labour-market shows significant gaps. In 1834, *e.g.* But then the manufacturers proposed to the Poor Law Commissioners that they should send the "surplus-population" of the agricultural districts to the

<sup>1</sup> John Ward, *History of the Borough of Stoke-upon-Trent*, London, 1843, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Ferrand's Speech in the House of Commons, 27th April, 1863.

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north, with the explanation "that the manufacturers would absorb and use it up."<sup>1</sup> "Agents were appointed with the consent of the Poor Law Commissioners. . . . An office was set up in Manchester, to which lists were sent of those workpeople in the agricultural districts wanting employment, and their names were registered in books. The manufacturers attended at these offices, and selected such persons as they chose ; when they had selected such persons as their 'wants required,' they gave instructions to have them forwarded to Manchester, and they were sent, ticketed like bales of goods, by canals, or with carriers, others tramping on the road, and many of them were found on the way lost and half-starved. This system had grown up into a regular trade. This House will hardly believe it, but I tell them, that this traffic in human flesh was as well kept up, they were in effect as regularly sold to these [Manchester] manufacturers as slaves are sold to the cotton-grower in the United States. . . . In 1860, 'the cotton trade was at its zenith.' . . . The manufacturers again found that they were short of hands. . . . They applied to the 'flesh agents,' as they are called. Those agents sent to the southern downs of England, to the pastures of Dorsetshire, to the glades of Devonshire, to the people tending kine in Wiltshire, but they sought in vain. The surplus-

<sup>1</sup> "Those were the very words used by the cotton manufacturers," l. c.

opulation was 'absorbed.' ” The *Bury Guardian* said, on the completion of the French treaty, that 10,000 additional hands could be absorbed by Lancashire, and that 30,000 or 40,000 will be needed.” After the “flesh agents and sub-agents” had in vain sought through the agricultural districts, “a deputation came up to London, and waited on the right hon. gentleman [Mr. Villiers, President of the Poor Law Board] with a view of obtaining poor children from certain union houses for the mills of Lancashire.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I. c., Mr. Villiers, despite the best of intentions on his part, was legally ” obliged to refuse the requests of the manufacturers. These gentlemen, however, attained their end through the obliging attitude of the local poor law boards. Mr. A. Redgrave, Inspector of Factories, asserts that this time the system under which orphans and pauper children were treated “legally” as apprentices “was not accompanied with the old abuses” (on these “abuses” see Engels, I. c.), although in one case there certainly was “abuse of this system in respect to a number of girls and young women brought from the agricultural districts of Scotland into Lancashire and Cheshire.” Under this system the manufacturer entered into contract with the workhouse authorities for a certain period. He fed, clothed, and lodged the children, and gave them a small allowance of money. A remark of Mr. Redgrave to be quoted directly seems strange, especially if we consider that even among the years of prosperity of the English cotton trade, the year 1860 stands unparalleled, and that, besides, wages were exceptionally high. For this extraordinary demand for work had to contend with the depopulation of Ireland, with unexampled emigration from the English and Scotch agricultural districts to Australia and America, with an actual diminution of the population in some of the English agricultural districts, in consequence partly of an actual breakdown of the vital force of the labourers, partly of the already effected dispersion of the disposable population through the dealers in human

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What experience shows to the capitalist generally is a constant excess of population, *i.e.*, an excess in relation to the momentary requirements of surplus-labour-absorbing capital, although this excess is made up of generations of human beings stunted, short-lived, swiftly replacing each other, plucked, so to say,

flesh. Despite all this Mr. Redgrave says : " This kind of labour, however, would only be sought after when none other could be procured, for it is a high-priced labour. The ordinary wages of a boy of 13 would be about 4s. per week, but to lodge, to clothe, to feed, and to provide medical attendance and proper superintendence for 50 or 100 of these boys, and to set aside some remuneration for them, could not be accomplished for 4s. a head per week."—(*Report of the Inspector of Factories for 30th April, 1860*, p. 27.) Mr. Redgrave forgets to tell us how the labourer himself can do all this for his children out of their 4s. a week wages, when the manufacturer cannot do it for the 50 or 100 children lodged, boarded, superintended all together. To guard against false conclusions from the text, I ought here to remark that the English cotton industry, since it was placed under the Factory Act of 1850 with its regulations of labour-time, &c., must be regarded as the model industry of England. The English cotton operative is in every respect better off than his continental companion in misery. " The Prussian factory operative labours at least ten hours per week more than his English competitor, and if employed at his own loom in his own house, his labour is not restricted to even those additional hours."—(*Rep. of Insp. of Fact.*, Oct. 1853, p. 103.) Redgrave, the Factory Inspector mentioned above, after the Industrial Exhibition in 1851, travelled on the Continent, especially in France and Germany, for the purpose of inquiring into the conditions of the factories. Of the Prussian operative he says : " He receives a remuneration sufficient to procure the simple fare, and to supply the slender comforts to which he has been accustomed . . . he lives upon his coarse fare, and works hard, wherein his position is subordinate to that of the English operative."—(*Rep. of Insp. of Fact.*, 31st Oct., 1853, p. 85.)

before maturity.<sup>1</sup> And, indeed, experience shows to the intelligent observer with what swiftness and grip the capitalist mode of production, dating, historically speaking, only from yesterday, has seized the vital power of the people by the very root—shows how the degeneration of the industrial population is only retarded by the constant absorption of primitive and physically uncorrupted elements from the country—shows how even the country labourers, in spite of fresh air and the principle of natural selection, that works so powerfully amongst them, and only permits the survival of the strongest, are already beginning to die off.<sup>2</sup> Capital that has such good reasons for denying the sufferings of the legions of workers that surround it, is in practice moved as much and as little

<sup>1</sup> The overworked “die off with strange rapidity; but the places of those who perish are instantly filled, and a frequent change of persons makes no alteration in the scene.”—(*England and America*, London, 1833, vol. i., p. 55. By E. G. Wakefield.)

<sup>2</sup> See *Public Health: Sixth Report of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council*, 1863. Published in London, 1864. This report deals especially with the agricultural labourers. “Sutherland . . . is commonly represented as a highly improved county . . . but . . . recent inquiry has discovered that even there, in districts once famous for fine men and gallant soldiers, the inhabitants have degenerated into a meagre and stunted race. In the healthiest situations, on hillsides fronting the sea, the faces of their famished children are as pale as they could be in the foul atmosphere of a London alley.”—(W. T. Thornton, “Over-population and its Remedy,” l. c., pp. 74, 75.) They resemble in fact the 30,000 “gallant Highlanders” whom Glasgow pigs together in its wynds and closes, with prostitutes and thieves.

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by the sight of the coming degradation and final depopulation of the human race, as by the probable fall of the earth into the sun. In every stock-jobbing swindle every one knows that some time or other the crash must come, but every one hopes that it may fall on the head of his neighbour, after he himself has caught the shower of gold and placed it in safety. *Après moi le déluge!* is the watchword of every capitalist and of every capitalist nation. Hence Capital is reckless of the health or length of life of the labourer, unless under compulsion from society.<sup>1</sup> To the outcry as to the physical and mental degradation, the premature death, the torture of overwork, it answers: Ought these to trouble us since they increase our profits? But looking at things as a whole, all this does not, indeed, depend on the good or ill will of the individual capitalist. Free competition brings out the inherent laws of capitalist production, in the shape of external coer-

<sup>1</sup> "But though the health of a population is so important a fact of the national capital, we are afraid it must be said that the class of employers of labour have not been the most forward to guard and cherish this treasure. . . . The consideration of the health of the operatives was forced upon the millowners."—(*Times*, November 5th, 1861.) "The men of the West Riding became the clothiers of mankind . . . the health of the workpeople was sacrificed, and the race in a few generations must have degenerated. But a reaction set in. Lord Shaftesbury's Bill limited the hours of children's labour," &c.—(*Report of the Registrar-General, for October 1861.*)

cive laws having power over every individual capitalist.<sup>1</sup>

The establishment of a normal working day is the result of centuries of struggle between capitalist and labourer. The history of this struggle shows two opposed tendencies. Compare, *e.g.*, the English factory legislation of our time with the English Labour Statutes from the 14th century to well into the middle of the 18th.<sup>2</sup> Whilst the modern Factory

<sup>1</sup> We, therefore, find, *e.g.*, that in the beginning of 1863, 26 firms owning extensive potteries in Staffordshire, amongst others, Josiah Wedgwood & Sons' petition in a memorial for "some legislative enactment." Competition with other capitalists permits them no voluntary limitation of working-time for children, &c. "Much as we deplore the evils before mentioned, it would not be possible to prevent them by any scheme of agreement between the manufacturers. . . . Taking all these points into consideration, we have come to the conviction that some legislative enactment is wanted."—(*Children's Employment Comm., Rep. 1., 1863, p. 322.*) Most recently a much more striking example offers. The rise in the price of cotton during a period of feverish activity, had induced the manufacturers in Blackburn to shorten, by mutual consent, the working-time in their mills during a certain fixed period. This period terminated about the end of November, 1871. Meanwhile, the wealthier manufacturers, who combined spinning with weaving, used the diminution of production resulting from this agreement, to extend their own business and thus to make great profits at the expense of the small employers. The latter thereupon turned in their extremity to the operatives, urged them earnestly to agitate for the 9 hours' system, and promised contributions in money to this end.

<sup>2</sup> The Labour Statutes, the like of which were enacted at the same time in France, the Netherlands, and elsewhere, were first formally repealed in England in 1813, long after the changes in methods of production had rendered them obsolete.



## *Compulsory Extension of the Working Day*

Acts compulsorily shortened the working day, the earlier statutes tried to lengthen it by compulsion. Of course the pretensions of capital in embryo—when, beginning to grow, it secures the right of absorbing a *quantum sufficit* of surplus-labour, not merely by the force of economic relations, but by the help of the State—appear very modest when put face to face with the concessions that, growling and struggling, it has to make in its adult condition. It takes centuries ere the “free” labourer, thanks to the development of capitalistic production, agrees, *i.e.*, is compelled by social conditions, to sell the whole of his active life, his very capacity for work, for the price of the necessities of life, his birthright for a mess of pottage. Hence it is natural that the lengthening of the working day, which capital, from the middle of the 14th to the end of the 17th century, tries to impose by State-measures on adult labourers, approximately coincides with the shortening of the working day which, in the second half of the 19th century, has here and there been effected by the State to prevent the coining of children’s blood into capital. That which to-day, *e.g.*, in the State of Massachusetts, until recently the freest State of the North-American Republic, has been proclaimed as the statutory limit of the labour of children under 12, was in England, even in the middle of the 17th century, the normal working day of able-

bodied artizans, robust labourers, athletic black-smiths.<sup>1</sup>

The first "Statute of Labourers" (23 Edward III., 1349) found its immediate pretext (not its cause, for legislation of this kind lasts centuries after the pretext for it has disappeared) in the great plague that decimated the people, so that, as a Tory writer says, "The difficulty of getting men to work on reasonable terms (*i.e.*, at a price that left their employers a reasonable quantity of surplus-labour) grew to such a height as to be quite intolerable."<sup>2</sup> Reasonable wages were,

<sup>1</sup> "No child under 12 years of age shall be employed in any manufacturing establishment more than 10 hours in one day."—General Statutes of Massachusetts, 63, ch. 12. (The various Statutes were passed between 1836 and 1858.) "Labour performed during a period of 10 hours on any day in all cotton, woollen, silk, paper, glass, and flax factories, or in manufactories of iron and brass, shall be considered a legal day's labour. And be it enacted, that hereafter no minor engaged in any factory shall be holden or required to work more than 10 hours in any day, or 60 hours in any week; and that hereafter no minor shall be admitted as a worker under the age of 10 years in any factory within this State." State of New Jersey. An Act to limit the hours of labour, &c., 61 and 62. (Law of 11th March, 1855.) "No minor who has attained the age of 12 years, and is under the age of 15 years, shall be employed in any manufacturing establishment more than 11 hours in any one day, nor before 5 o'clock in the morning, nor after 7.30 in the evening."—"Revised Statutes of the State of Rhode Island," &c., ch. 39, § 23, 1st July, 1857.)

<sup>2</sup> *Sophisms of Free Trade*, 7th Ed., London, 1850, p. 205; 9th Ed., p. 253. This same Tory, moreover, admits that "Acts of Parliament regulating wages, but against the labourer and in favour of the master, lasted for the long period of 464 years. Population

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therefore, fixed by law as well as the limits of the working day. The latter point, the only one that here interests us, is repeated in the Statute of 1496 (Henry VIII.). The working day for all artificers and field-labourers from March to September ought, according to this statute (which, however, could not be enforced), to last from 5 in the morning to between 7 and 8 in the evening. But the meal times consist of 1 hour for breakfast,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours for dinner, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour for "noon-meate," *i.e.*, exactly twice as much as under the factory acts now in force.<sup>1</sup> In winter, work was to last from 5 in the morning until dark, with the same intervals. A statute of Elizabeth of 1562 leaves the length of the working day for all labourers "hired for daily or weekly wage" untouched, but aims at limiting the intervals to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours in the summer, or to 2 in the winter. Dinner is only to last 1 hour, and the "after-grew. These laws were then found, and really became, unnecessary and burdensome."—(l. c., p. 206.)

<sup>1</sup> In reference to this statute, J. Wade with truth remarks: "From the statement above (*i.e.*, with regard to the statute) it appears that in 1496 the diet was considered equivalent to one-third of the income of an artificer and one-half the income of a labourer, which indicates a greater degree of independence among the working classes than prevails at present; for the board, both of labourers and artificers, would now be reckoned at a much higher proportion of their wages."—(J. Wade, *History of the Middle and Working Classes*, pp. 24, 25 and 577.) The opinion that this difference is due to the difference in the price-relations between food and clothing then and now is refuted by the most cursory glance at *Chronicon Pretiosum, &c.*, by Bishop Fleetwood, 1st Ed., London, 1707; 2nd Ed., London, 1745.

noon-sleep of half an hour " is only allowed between the middle of May and the middle of August. For every hour of absence 1d. is to be subtracted from the wage. In practice, however, the conditions were much more favourable to the labourers than in the statute book. William Petty, the father of political economy, and to some extent the founder of Statistics, says in a work that he published in the last third of the 17th century : " Labouring-men (then meaning field-labourers) work 10 hours per diem, and make 20 meals per week, viz., 3 a day for working days, and 2 on Sundays ; whereby it is plain, that if they could fast on Fryday nights, and dine in one hour and an half, whereas they take two, from eleven to one ; thereby this working  $\frac{1}{20}$  more, and spending  $\frac{1}{20}$  less, the above-mentioned (tax) might be raised." <sup>1</sup> Was not Dr. Andrew Ure right in crying down the 12 hours' bill of 1833 as a retrogression to the times of the dark ages ? It is true, these regulations contained in the statute mentioned by Petty, apply also to apprentices. But the condition of child-labour, even at the end of the 17th century, is seen from the following complaint : " 'Tis not their practice (in Germany) as with us in this kingdom, to bind an apprentice for seven years ; three or four is their common standard : and the reason is, because they are educated from their

<sup>1</sup> W. Petty, *Political Anatomy of Ireland, Verbum Sapienti*, 1672, Ed. 1691, p. 10.

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cradle to something of employment, which renders them the more apt and docile, and consequently the more capable of attaining to a ripeness and quicker proficiency in business. Whereas our youth, here in England, being bred to nothing before they come to be apprentices, make a very slow progress and require much longer time wherein to reach the perfection of accomplished artists.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *A Discourse on the necessity of encouraging Mechanick Industry*, London, 1689, p. 13. Macaulay, who has falsified English history in the interest of the Whigs and the bourgeoisie, declares as follows : “The practice of setting children prematurely to work . . . prevailed in the 17th century to an extent which, when compared with the extent of the manufacturing system, seems almost incredible. At Norwich, the chief seat of the clothing trade, a little creature of six years old was thought fit for labour. Several writers of that time, and among them some who were considered as eminently benevolent, mention with exultation the fact that in that single city, boys and girls of very tender age create wealth exceeding what was necessary for their own subsistence by twelve thousand pounds a year. The more carefully we examine the history of the past, the more reason shall we find to dissent from those who imagine that our age has been fruitful of new social evils. . . . That which is new is the intelligence and the humanity which remedies them.”—(*History of England*, vol. i., p. 419.) Macaulay might have reported further that “extremely well-disposed” *amis du commerce* in the 17th century, narrate with “exultation” how in a poorhouse in Holland a child of four was employed, and that this example of “*vertu mise en pratique*” passes muster in all the humanitarian works, à la Macaulay, to the time of Adam Smith. It is true that with the substitution of manufacture for handicrafts, traces of the exploitation of children begin to appear. This exploitation existed always to a certain extent among peasants, and was the more developed, the heavier the yoke pressing on the husbandman. The tendency of capital

Still, during the greater part of the 18th century, up to the epoch of Modern Industry and machinism, capital in England had not succeeded in seizing for itself, by the payment of the weekly value of labour-power, the whole week of the labourer, with the exception, however, of the agricultural labourers. The fact that they could live for a whole week on the wage of four days, did not appear to the labourers a sufficient reason that they should work the other two days for the capitalist. One party of English economists, in the interest of capital, denounces this obstinacy in the most violent manner, another party defends the labourers. Let us listen, *e.g.*, to the contest between Postlethwayt whose *Dictionary of Trade* then had the same reputation as the kindred works of M'Culloch and M'Gregor to-day, and the author (already quoted) of the *Essay on Trade and Commerce*.<sup>1</sup>

is there unmistakably ; but the facts themselves are still as isolated as the phenomena of two-headed children. Hence they were noted "with exultation" as especially worthy of remark and as wonders by the far-seeing "*amis du commerce*," and recommended as models for their own time and for posterity. This same Scotch sycophant and fine talker, Macaulay, says : "We hear to-day only of retrogression and see only progress." What eyes, and especially what ears !

<sup>1</sup> Among the accusers of the workpeople, the most angry is the anonymous author quoted in the text of *An Essay on trade and commerce, containing observations on Taxation, &c.*, London, 1770. He had already dealt with this subject in his earlier work : *Considerations on Taxes*, London, 1765. On the same side follows Polonius Arthur Young, the unutterable statistical prattler. Among

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Postlethwayt says among other things : “ We cannot put an end to those few observations without noticing that trite remark in the mouth of too many ; that if the industrious poor can obtain enough to maintain themselves in five days, they will not work the whole six. Whence they infer the necessity of even the necessaries of life being made dear by taxes, or any other means, to compel the working artisan and manufacturer to labour the whole six days in the week, without ceasing. I must beg leave to differ in sentiment from those great politicians, who contend for the perpetual slavery of the working people of this kingdom ; they forget the vulgar adage, all work and no play. Have not the English boasted of the ingenuity and dexterity of her working artists and manufacturers which have heretofore given credit and reputation to British wares in general ? What has this been owing to ? To nothing more probably than the relaxation of the working people in their own way. Were they obliged to toil the year round, the whole six days in the week, in a repetition of the same work,

the defenders of the working classes the foremost are : Jacob Vanderlint, in, *Money answers all things*, London, 1734 ; the Rev. Nathaniel Forster, D.D., in *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Present Price of Provisions*, London, 1766 ; Dr. Price, and especially Postlethwayt, as well in the supplement to his *Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*, as in his *Great Britain’s Commerical Interest explained and improved*, 2nd Edition, 1755. The facts themselves are confirmed by many other writers of the time, among others by Josiah Tucker.

might it not blunt their ingenuity, and render them stupid instead of alert and dexterous ; and might not our workmen lose their reputation instead of maintaining it by such eternal slavery ? . . . And what sort of workmanship could we expect from such hard-driven animals ? . . . Many of them will execute as much work in four days as a Frenchman will in five or six. But if Englishmen are to be eternal drudges, 'tis to be feared they will degenerate below the Frenchmen. As our people are famed for bravery in war, do we not say that it is owing to good English roast beef and pudding in their bellies, as well as their constitutional spirit of liberty ? And why may not the superior ingenuity and dexterity of our artists and manufactures be owing to that freedom and liberty to direct themselves in their own way, and I hope we shall never have them deprived of such privileges and that good living from whence their ingenuity no less than their courage may proceed.”<sup>1</sup> Thereupon the author of the *Essay on Trade and Commerce* replies : “ If the making of every seventh day an holiday is supposed to be of divine institution, as it implies the appropriating the other six days to labour ” (he means capital as we shall soon see) “ surely it will not be thought cruel to enforce it. . . . That mankind in general, are naturally inclined to ease and indolence, we fatally experience to be true, from the conduct of

<sup>1</sup> Postlethwayt, l. c., “ First Preliminary Discourse,” p. 14.



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our manufacturing populace, who do not labour, upon an average, above four days in a week, unless provisions happen to be very dear. . . . Put all the necessities of the poor under one denomination ; for instance, call them all wheat, or suppose that . . . the bushel of wheat shall cost five shillings and that he (a manufacturer) earns a shilling by his labour, he then would be obliged to work five days only in a week. If the bushel of wheat should cost but four shillings, he would be obliged to work but four days ; but as wages in this kingdom are much higher in proportion to the price of necessities . . . the manufacturer, who labours four days, has a surplus of money to live idle with the rest of the week. . . . I hope I have said enough to make it appear that the moderate labour of six days in a week is no slavery. Our labouring people do this, and to all appearance are the happiest of all our labouring poor,<sup>1</sup> but the Dutch do this in manufactures, and appear to be a very happy people. The French do so, when holidays do not intervene.<sup>2</sup> But our populace have adopted a notion, that as Englishmen they enjoy a birthright privilege of being more free and independent than in

<sup>1</sup> *An Essay, &c.* He himself relates on p. 96 wherein the "happiness" of the English agricultural labourer already in 1770 consisted. "Their powers are always upon the stretch, they cannot live cheaper than they do, nor work harder."

<sup>2</sup> Protestantism, by changing almost all the traditional holidays into workdays, plays an important part in the genesis of capital.

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any country in Europe. Now this idea, as far as it may affect the bravery of our troops, may be of some use ; but the less the manufacturing poor have of it, certainly the better for themselves and for the State. The labouring people should never think themselves independent of their superiors. . . . It is extremely dangerous to encourage mobs in a commercial state like ours, where, perhaps, seven parts out of eight of the whole, are people with little or no property. The cure will not be perfect, till our manufacturing poor are contented to labour six days for the same sum which they now earn in four days.”<sup>1</sup> To this end, and for “ extirpating idleness, debauchery and excess,” promoting a spirit of industry, “ lowering the price of labour in our manufactories, and easing the lands of the heavy burden of poor’s rates,” our “ faithful Eckart ” of capital proposes this approved device : to shut up such labourers as become dependent on public support, in a word, paupers, in “ an *ideal workhouse*.” Such ideal workhouse must be made a “ House of Terror,” and not an asylum for the poor, “ where they are to be plentifully fed, warmly and decently clothed, and where they do but little work.”<sup>2</sup> In this “ House of Terror,” this “ ideal workhouse,

<sup>1</sup> *An Essay, &c.*, pp. 15, 41, 96, 97, 55, 57, 69.—Jacob Vanderlint, as early as 1734, declared that the secret of the outcry of the capitalists as to the laziness of the working people was simply that they claimed for the same wages 6 days’ labour instead of 4.

<sup>2</sup> l. c., p. 242.

### *Compulsory Extension of the Working Day*

the poor shall work 14 hours in a day, allowing proper time for meals, in such manner that there shall remain 12 hours of neat-labour.”<sup>1</sup>

Twelve working hours daily in the Ideal Work-house, in the “House of Terror” of 1770! 63 years later, in 1833, when the English Parliament reduced the working day for children of 13 to 18, in four branches of industry to 12 full hours, the judgment day of English Industry had dawned! In 1852, when Louis Bonaparte sought to secure his position with the bourgeoisie by tampering with the legal working day, the French people cried out with one voice “the law that limits the working day to 12 hours is the one good that has remained to us of the legislation of the Republic!”<sup>2</sup> At Zürich the work of children over 10, is limited to 12 hours; in Aargau in 1862, the work of children between

<sup>1</sup> l. c. “The French,” he says, “laugh at our enthusiastic ideas of liberty” (l. c., p. 78).

<sup>2</sup> “They especially objected to work beyond the 12 hours per day, because the law which fixed those hours, is the only good which remains to them of the legislation of the Republic.”—(*Rep. of Insp. of Fact.*, 31st October, 1856, p. 80.) The French Twelve hours’ Bill of September 5th, 1850, a bourgeois edition of the decree of the Provisional Government of March 2nd, 1848, holds in all workshops without exceptions. Before this law the working day in France was without definite limit. It lasted in the factories 14, 15, or more hours. See *Des classes ouvrières en France, pendant l’année 1848*, par M. Blanqui. M. Blanqui the economist, not the Revolutionist, had been entrusted by the Government with an inquiry into the condition of the working class.

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13 and 16, was reduced from  $12\frac{1}{2}$  to 12 hours ; in Austria in 1860, for children between 14 and 16, the same reduction was made.<sup>1</sup> "What a progress," since 1770 ! Macaulay would shout with exultation !

The "House of Terror" for paupers of which the capitalistic soul of 1770 only dreamed, was realized a few years later in the shape of a gigantic "Work-house" for the industrial worker himself. It is called the Factory. And the ideal this time fades before the reality.

SECTION 6.—THE STRUGGLE FOR THE NORMAL WORKING DAY. COMPULSORY LIMITATION BY LAW OF THE WORKING-TIME. THE ENGLISH FACTORY ACTS, 1833 TO 1864

After capital had taken centuries in extending the working day to its normal maximum limit, and then

<sup>1</sup> Belgium is the model bourgeois state in regard to the regulation of the working day. Lord Howard of Welden, English Plenipotentiary at Brussels, reports to the Foreign Office, May 12th, 1862 : "M. Rogier, the minister, informed me that children's labour is limited neither by a general law nor by any local regulations ; that the Government, during the last three years, intended in every session to propose a bill on the subject, but always found an insuperable obstacle in the jealous opposition to any legislation in contradiction with the principle of perfect freedom of labour."

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beyond this to the limit of the natural day of 12 hours,<sup>1</sup> there followed on the birth of machinism and modern industry in the last third of the 18th century, a violent encroachment like that of an avalanche in its intensity and extent. All bounds of morals and nature, age and sex, day and night, were broken down. Even the ideas of day and night, of rustic simplicity in the old statutes, became so confused that an English judge, as late as 1860, needed a quite Talmudic sagacity to explain "judicially" what was day and what was night.<sup>2</sup> Capital celebrated its orgies.

As soon as the working class, stunned at first by the noise and turmoil of the new system of production, recovered, in some measure, its senses, its resistance began, and first in the native land of machinism, in England. For 30 years, however, the concessions

<sup>1</sup> "It is certainly much to be regretted that any class of persons should toil 12 hours a day, which, including the time for their meals and for going to and returning from their work, amounts, in fact, to 14 of the 24 hours. . . . Without entering into the question of health, no one will hesitate, I think, to admit that, in a moral point of view, so entire an absorption of the time of the working classes, without intermission, from the early age of 13, and in trades not subject to restriction, much younger, must be extremely prejudicial, and is an evil greatly to be deplored. . . . For the sake, therefore, of public morals, of bringing up an orderly population, and of giving the great body of the people a reasonable enjoyment of life, it is much to be desired that in all trades some portion of every working day should be reserved for rest and leisure."—(Leonard Horner in *Reports of Insp. of Fact., Dec., 1841.*)

<sup>2</sup> See "Judgment of Mr. J. H. Otwey, Belfast. Hilary Sessions, County Antrim, 1860."

conquered by the workpeople were purely nominal. Parliament passed 5 Labour Laws between 1802 and 1833, but was shrewd enough not to vote a penny for their carrying out, for the requisite officials, &c.<sup>1</sup>

They remained a dead letter. "The fact is, that prior to the Act of 1833, young persons and children were worked all night, all day, or both *ad libitum*." <sup>2</sup>

A normal working day for modern industry only dates from the Factory Act of 1833, which included cotton, wool, flax, and silk factories. Nothing is more characteristic of the spirit of capital than the history of the English Factory Acts from 1833 to 1864.

The Act of 1833 declares the ordinary factory working day to be from half-past five in the morning to half-past eight in the evening, and within these limits, a period of 15 hours, it is lawful to employ young persons (*i.e.*, persons between 13 and 18 years of age), at any

<sup>1</sup> It is very characteristic of the régime of Louis Philippe, the bourgeois king, that the one Factory Act passed during his reign, that of March 22nd, 1841, was never put in force. And this law only dealt with child-labour. It fixed 8 hours a day for children between 8 and 12, 12 hours for children between 12 and 16, &c., with many exceptions which allow night-work even for children 8 years old. The supervision and enforcement of this law are, in a country where every mouse is under police administration, left to the good-will of the *amis du commerce*. Only since 1853, in one single department—the Département du Nord—has a paid government inspector been appointed. Not less characteristic of the development of French society, generally, is the fact, that Louis Philippe's law stood solitary among the all-embracing mass of French laws, till the Revolution of 1848.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of Insp. of Fact., 30th April, 1860*, p. 50.

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time of the day, provided no one individual young person should work more than 12 hours in any one day, except in certain cases especially provided for. The 6th section of the Act provided : "That there shall be allowed in the course of every day not less than one and a half hours for meals to every such person restricted as hercinbefore provided." The employment of children under 9, with exceptions mentioned later, was forbidden ; the work of children between 9 and 13 was limited to 8 hours a day, night-work, *i.e.*, according to this Act, work between 8.30 p.m. and 5.30 a.m., was forbidden for all persons between 9 and 18.

The law-makers were so far from wishing to trench on the freedom of capital to exploit adult labour-power, or, as they called it, "the freedom of labour," that they created a special system in order to prevent the Factory Acts from having a consequence so outrageous.

"The great evil of the factory system as at present conducted," says the first report of the Central Board of the Commission of June 28th, 1833, "has appeared to us to be that it entails the necessity of continuing the labour of children to the utmost length of that of the adults. The only remedy for this evil, short of the limitation of the labour of adults, which would, in our opinion, create an evil greater than that which is sought to be remedied, appears to be the plan of

working double sets of children." . . . Under the name of System of Relays, this " plan " was therefore carried out, so that, *e.g.*, from 5.30 a.m. until 1.30 in the afternoon, one set of children between 9 and 13, and from 1.30 p.m. to 8.30 in the evening another set were " put to," &c.

In order to reward the manufacturers for having, in the most barefaced way, ignored all the Acts as to children's labour passed during the last twenty-two years, the pill was yet further gilded for them. Parliament decreed that after March 1st, 1834, no child under 11, after March 1st, 1835, no child under 12, and after March 1st, 1836, no child under 13, was to work more than eight hours in a factory. This " liberalism," so full of consideration for " capital," was the more noteworthy as, Dr. Farre, Sir A. Carlisle, Sir B. Brodie, Sir C. Bell, Mr. Guthrie, &c., in a word, the most distinguished physicians and surgeons in London, had declared in their evidence before the House of Commons, that there was danger in delay. Dr. Farre expressed himself still more coarsely : " Legislation is necessary for the prevention of death, in any form in which it can be prematurely inflicted, and certainly this (*i.e.*, the factory method) must be viewed as a most cruel mode of inflicting it."

That same " reformed " Parliament, which in its delicate consideration for the manufacturers, condemned children under 13, for years to come, to 72



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hours of work per week in the Factory Hell, on the other hand, in the Emancipation Act, which also administered freedom drop by drop, forbade the planters, from the outset, to work any negro slave more than 45 hours a week.

But in no wise conciliated, capital now began a noisy agitation that went on for several years. It turned chiefly on the age of those who, under the name of children, were limited to 8 hours' work, and were subject to a certain amount of compulsory education. According to capitalistic anthropology, the age of childhood ended at 10, or at the outside, at 11. The more nearly the time approached for the coming into full force of the Factory Act, the fatal year 1836, the more wildly raged the mob of manufacturers. They managed, in fact, to intimidate the government to such an extent that in 1835 it proposed to lower the limit of the age of childhood from 13 to 12. In the meantime the pressure from without grew more threatening. Courage failed the House of Commons. It refused to throw children of 13 under the Juggernaut Car of capital for more than 8 hours a day, and the Act of 1833 came into full operation. It remained unaltered until June, 1844.

In the ten years during which it regulated factory work, first in part, and then entirely, the official reports of the factory inspectors teem with complaints as to the impossibility of putting the Act into force.

As the law of 1833 left it optional with the lords of capital during the 15 hours, from 5.30 a.m. to 8.30 p.m., to make every "young person," and "every child" begin, break off, resume, or end his 12 or 8 hours at any moment they liked, and also permitted them to assign to different persons, different times for meals, these gentlemen soon discovered a new "system of relays," by which the labour-horses were not changed at fixed stations, but were constantly re-harnessed at changing stations. We do not pause longer on the beauty of this system, as we shall have to return to it later. But this much is clear at the first glance: that this system annulled the whole Factory Act, not only in the spirit, but in the letter. How could factory inspectors, with this complex book-keeping in respect to each individual child or young person, enforce the legally determined work-time and the granting of the legal meal-times? In a great many of the factories, the old brutalities soon blossomed out again unpunished. In an interview with the Home Secretary (1844), the factory inspectors demonstrated the impossibility of any control under the newly invented relay system.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime, however, circumstances had greatly changed. The factory hands, especially since 1838, had made the Ten Hours' Bill their economical, as they had made the Charter their political, election-cry. Some of the manufacturers,

<sup>1</sup> *Rept. of Insp. of Fact.*, 31st October, 1849, p. 6.

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even, who had managed their factories in conformity with the Act of 1833, overwhelmed Parliament with memorials on the immoral competition of their false brethren whom greater impudence, or more fortunate local circumstances, enabled to break the law. Moreover, however much the individual manufacturer might give the rein to his old lust for gain, the spokesmen and political leaders of the manufacturing class ordered a change of front and of speech towards the workpeople. They had entered upon the contest for the repeal of the Corn Laws, and needed the workers to help them to victory. They promised, therefore, not only a double-sized loaf of bread, but the enactment of the Ten Hours' Bill in the Free Trade millennium.<sup>1</sup> Thus they still less dared to oppose a measure intended only to make the law of 1833 a reality. Threatened in their holiest interest, the rent of land, the Tories thundered with philanthropic indignation against the "nefarious practices"<sup>2</sup> of their foes.

This was the origin of the additional Factory Act of June 7th, 1844. It came into effect on September 10th, 1844. It places under protection a new category of workers, viz., the women over 18. They were

<sup>1</sup> *Rept. of Insp. of Fact.*, 31st October, 1848, p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> Leonard Horner uses the expression "nefarious practices" in his official reports.—(*Report of Insp. of Fact.*, 31st October, 1859, p. 7.)

placed in every respect on the same footing as the young persons, their work-time limited to twelve hours, their night-labour forbidden, &c. For the first time, legislation saw itself compelled to control directly and officially the labour of adults. In the Factory Report of 1844-45, it is said with irony: "No instances have come to my knowledge of adult women having expressed any regret at their *rights* being thus far interfered with."<sup>1</sup> The working-time of children under 13 was reduced to 6½, and in certain circumstances to 7 hours a day.<sup>2</sup>

To get rid of the abuses of the "spurious relay-system," the law established besides others the following important regulations:—"That the hours of work of children and young persons shall be reckoned from the time when any child or young person shall begin to work in the morning." So that if A, *e.g.*, begins work at 8 in the morning, and B at 10, B's work-day must nevertheless end at the same hour as A's. "The time shall be regulated by a public clock," for example, the nearest railway clock, by which the factory clock is to be set. The occupier is to hang up a "legible" printed notice stating the hours for the beginning and ending of work and the times allowed for the several

<sup>1</sup> *Rept., &c., 30th Sept., 1844*, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> The Act allows children to be employed for 10 hours if they do not work day after day, but only on alternate days. In the main, this clause remained inoperative.

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meals. Children beginning work before 12 noon may not be again employed after 1 p.m. The afternoon shift must therefore consist of other children than those employed in the morning. Of the hour and a half for meal-times, "one hour thereof at the least shall be given before three of the clock in the afternoon . . . and at the same period of the day. No child or young person shall be employed more than five hours before 1 p.m. without an interval for meal-time of at least 30 minutes. No child or young person [or female] shall be employed or allowed to remain in any room in which any manufacturing process is then [*i.e.*, at meal times] carried on," &c.

It has been seen that these minutiae, which, with military uniformity, regulate by stroke of the clock the times, limits, pauses of the work, were not at all the products of Parliamentary fancy. They developed gradually out of circumstances as natural laws of the modern mode of production. Their formulation, official recognition, and proclamation by the State, were the result of a long struggle of classes. One of their first consequences was that in practice the working day of the adult males in factories became subject to the same limitations, since in most processes of production the co-operation of the children, young persons, and women is indispensable. On the whole, therefore, during the period from 1844 to 1847, the 12 hours' working day became general and uni-

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form in all branches of industry under the Factory Act.

The manufacturers, however, did not allow this "progress" without a compensating "retrogression." At their instigation the House of Commons reduced the minimum age for exploitable children from 9 to 8, in order to assure that additional supply of factory children which is due to capitalists, according to divine and human law.<sup>1</sup>

The years 1846-47 are epoch-making in the economic history of England. The Repeal of the Corn Laws, and of the duties on cotton and other raw material; free trade proclaimed as the guiding star of legislation; in a word, the arrival of the millennium. On the other hand, in the same years, the Chartist movement and the 10 hours' agitation reached their highest point. They found allies in the Tories panting for revenge. Despite the fanatical opposition of the army of perjured Free-traders, with Bright and Cobden at their head, the Ten Hours' Bill, struggled for so long, went through Parliament.

The new Factory Act of June 8th, 1847, enacted that on July 1st, 1847, there should be a preliminary shortening of the working day for "young persons"

<sup>1</sup> "As a reduction in their hours of work would cause a larger number (of children) to be employed, it was thought that the additional supply of children from 8 to 9 years of age would meet the increased demand" (l. c., p. 13).

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(from 13 to 18), and all females to 11 hours, but that on May 1st, 1848, there should be a definite limitation of the working day to 10 hours. In other respects, the Act only amended and completed the Acts of 1833 and 1844.

Capital now entered upon a preliminary campaign in order to hinder the Act from coming into full force on May 1st, 1848. And the workers themselves, under the pretence that they had been taught by experience, were to help in the destruction of their own work. The moment was cleverly chosen. "It must be remembered, too, that there has been more than two years of great suffering (in consequence of the terrible crisis of 1846-47) among the factory operatives, from many mills having worked short time, and many being altogether closed. A considerable number of the operatives must therefore be in very narrow circumstances ; many, it is to be feared, in debt ; so that it might fairly have been presumed that at the present time they would prefer working the longer time, in order to make up for past losses, perhaps to pay off debts, or get their furniture out of pawn, or replace that sold, or to get a new supply of clothes for themselves and their families."<sup>1</sup>

The manufacturers tried to aggravate the natural effect of these circumstances by a general reduction of wages by 10 %. This was done, so to say, to cele-

<sup>1</sup> *Rep. of Insp. of Fact.*, 31st Oct., 1848, p. 16.

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brate the inauguration of the new Free Trade era. Then followed a further reduction of  $8\frac{1}{3}\%$  as soon as the working day was shortened to 11, and a reduction of double that amount as soon as it was finally shortened to 10 hours. Wherever, therefore, circumstances allowed it, a reduction of wages of at least 25 % took place.<sup>1</sup> Under such favourably prepared conditions the agitation among the factory workers for the repeal of the Act of 1847 was begun. Neither lies, bribery, nor threats were spared in this attempt. But all was in vain. Concerning the half-dozen petitions in which workpeople were made to complain of "their oppression by the Act," the petitioners themselves declared under oral examination, that their signatures had been extorted from them. "They felt themselves oppressed, but not exactly by the Factory Act."<sup>2</sup> But if the manufacturers did not succeed in making the workpeople speak as they wished, they themselves shrieked all the louder in press and Parliament in the name of the workpeople. They de-

<sup>1</sup> "I found that men who had been getting 10s. a week, had had 1s. taken off for a reduction in the rate of 10 per cent., and 1s. 6d. off the remaining 9s. for the reduction in time, together 2s. 6d., and notwithstanding this, many of them said they would rather work 10 hours" (l. c.).

<sup>2</sup> "'Though I signed it [the petition], I said at the time I was putting my hand to a wrong thing. 'Then why did you put your hand to it?' 'Because I should have been turned off if I had refused.' Whence it would appear that this petitioner felt himself 'oppressed,' but not exactly by the Factory Act" (l. c., p. 102).



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nounced the Factory Inspectors as a kind of revolutionary commissioners like those of the French National Convention ruthlessly sacrificing the unhappy factory workers to their humanitarian crotchet. This manœuvre also failed. Factory Inspector Leonard Horner conducted in his own person, and through his sub-inspectors, many examinations of witnesses in the factories of Lancashire. About 70 % of the work-people examined declared in favour of 10 hours, a much smaller percentage in favour of 11, and an altogether insignificant minority for the old 12 hours.<sup>1</sup>

Another "friendly" dodge was to make the adult males work 12 to 15 hours, and then to blazon abroad this fact as the best proof of what the proletariat desired in its heart of hearts. But the "ruthless" Factory Inspector Leonard Horner was again to the fore. The majority of the "overtimers" declared: "They would much prefer working ten hours for less wages, but that they had no choice; that so many were out of employment (so many spinners getting very low wages by having to work as piecers, being unable to do better), that if they refused to work the longer time, others would immediately get their places, so that it was a question with them of

<sup>1</sup> P. 17, l. c. In Mr. Horner's district 10,270 adult male labourers were thus examined in 101 factories. Their evidence is to be found in the appendix to the Factory Reports for the half-year ending October 1848. These examinations furnish valuable material in other connections also.

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agreeing to work the long time, or of being thrown out of employment altogether.”<sup>1</sup>

The preliminary campaign of capital thus came to grief, and the Ten Hours' Act came into force May 1st, 1848. But meanwhile the fiasco of the Chartist party whose leaders were imprisoned, and whose organization was dismembered, had shaken the confidence of the English working class in its own strength. Soon after this the June insurrections in Paris and its bloody suppression united, in England as on the Continent, all fractions of the ruling classes, landlords and capitalists, stock-exchange wolves and shop-keepers, Protectionists and Free-traders, government and opposition, priests and free-thinkers, young whores and old nuns, under the common cry for the salvation of Property, Religion, the Family and Society. The working class was everywhere proclaimed, placed under a ban, under a virtual law of suspects. The manufacturers had no need any longer to restrain themselves. They broke out in open revolt not only against the Ten Hours' Act, but against the whole of the legislation that since 1833 had aimed at restricting in some measure the “free” exploitation of labour-power. It was a pro-slavery rebellion in miniature,

<sup>1</sup> 1. c. See the evidence collected by Leonard Horner himself, Nos. 69, 70, 71, 72, 92, 93, and that collected by Sub-Inspector A., Nos. 51, 52, 58, 59, 62, 70, of the Appendix. One manufacturer, too, tells the plain truth. See No. 14, and No. 265, 1. c.

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carried on for over two years with a cynical recklessness, a terrorist energy all the cheaper because the rebel capitalist risked nothing except the skin of his "hands."

To understand that which follows we must remember that the Factory Acts of 1833, 1844, and 1847 were all three in force so far as the one did not amend the other : that not one of these limited the working day of the male worker over 18, and that since 1833 the 15 hours from 5.30 a.m. to 8.30 p.m. had remained the legal "day," within the limits of which at first the 12, and later the 10 hours' labour of young persons and women had to be performed under the prescribed conditions.

The manufacturers began by here and there discharging a part of, in many cases half of, the young persons and women employed by them, and then, for the adult males, restoring the almost obsolete night-work. The Ten Hours' Act, they cried, leaves no other alternative.<sup>1</sup>

Their second step dealt with the legal pauses for meals. Let us hear the Factory Inspectors. "Since the restriction of the hours of work to ten, the factory occupiers maintain, although they have not yet practically gone the whole length, that supposing the hours of work to be from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., they fulfil the provisions of the statutes by allowing an

<sup>1</sup> *Reports, &c. for 31st October, 1848*, pp. 133, 134.

hour before 9 a.m. and half-an-hour after 7 p.m. (for meals). In some cases they now allow an hour, or half an hour for dinner, insisting at the same time, that they are not bound to allow any part of the hour and a half in the course of the factory working-day.”<sup>1</sup> The manufacturers maintained therefore that the scrupulously strict provisions of the Acts of 1844 with regard to meal-times only gave the operatives permission to eat and drink before coming into, and after leaving the factory—*i.e.*, at home. And why should not the workpeople eat their dinner before 9 in the morning? The crown lawyers, however, decided that the prescribed meal-times “must be in the interval during the working hours, and that it will not be lawful to work for 10 hours continuously, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., without any interval.”<sup>2</sup>

After these pleasant demonstrations, Capital precluded its revolt by a step which agreed with the letter of the law of 1844, and was therefore legal.

The Act of 1844 certainly prohibited the employment after 1 p.m. of such children, from 8 to 13, as had been employed before noon. But it did not regulate in any way the 6½ hours’ work of the children whose work-time began at 12 midday or later. Children of 8 might, if they began work at noon, be employed from 12 to 1, 1 hour; from 2 to 4 in

<sup>1</sup> *Reports, &c., for 30th April, 1848*, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> *Reports, &c., for 31st October, 1848*, p. 130.

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the afternoon, 2 hours ; from 5 to 8.30 in the evening,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours ; in all, the legal  $6\frac{1}{2}$  hours. Or better still. In order to make their work coincide with that of the adult male labourers up to 8.30 p.m., the manufacturers only had to give them no work till 2 in the afternoon ; they could then keep them in the factory without intermission till 8.30 in the evening. " And it is now expressly admitted that the practice exists in England from the desire of mill-owners to have their machinery at work for more than 10 hours a-day, to keep the children at work with male adults after all the young persons and women have left, and until 8.30 p.m., if the factory-owners choose." <sup>1</sup> Workmen and factory inspectors protested on hygienic and moral grounds, but Capital answered :

" My deeds upon my head ! I crave the law,  
The penalty and forfeit of my bond."

In fact, according to statistics laid before the House of Commons on July 26th, 1850, in spite of all protests, on July 15th, 1850, 3,742 children were subjected to this " practice " in 257 factories.<sup>2</sup> Still, this was not enough. The lynx eye of Capital discovered that the Act of 1844 did not allow 5 hours' work before mid-day without a pause of at least 30 minutes for refresh-

<sup>1</sup> *Reports, &c.*, l. c., p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> *Reports, &c.*, for 31st October, 1850, pp. 5, 6.

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ment, but prescribed nothing of the kind for work after mid-day. Therefore, it claimed and obtained the enjoyment not only of making children of 8 drudge without intermission from 2 to 8.30 p.m., but also of making them hunger during that time.

“ Ay, his heart,  
So says the bond.” <sup>1</sup>

This Shylock-clinging to the letter of the law of 1844, so far as it regulated children's labour, was but to lead up to an open revolt against the same law, so far as it regulated the labour of “ young persons and women.” It will be remembered that the abolition of the “ false relay system ” was the chief aim and object of that law. The masters began their revolt with the simple declaration that the sections of the

<sup>1</sup> The nature of capital remains the same in its developed as in its undeveloped form. In the code which the influence of the slave-owners, shortly before the outbreak of the American Civil War, imposed on the territory of New Mexico, it is said that the labourer, in as much as the capitalist has brought his labour-power, “ is his (the capitalist's) money.” The same view was current among the Roman patricians. The money they had advanced to the plebeian debtor had been transformed *via* the means of subsistence into the flesh and blood of the debtor. This “ flesh and blood ” were, therefore, “ their money.” Hence, the Shylock-law of the Ten Tables. Linguet's hypothesis that the patrician creditors from time to time prepared, beyond the Tiber, banquets of debtors' flesh, may remain as undecided as that of Daumer on the Christian Eucharist.

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Act of 1844 which prohibited the *ad libitum* use of young persons and women in such short fractions of the day of 15 hours as the employer chose, were "comparatively harmless" so long as the work-time was fixed at 12 hours. But under the Ten Hours' Act they were a "grievous hardship."<sup>1</sup> They informed the inspectors in the coolest manner that they should place themselves above the letter of the law, and re-introduce the old system on their own account.<sup>2</sup> They were acting in the interests of the ill-advised operatives themselves, "in order to be able to pay them higher wages." "This was the only possible plan by which to maintain, under the Ten Hours' Act, the industrial supremacy of Great Britain." "Perhaps it may be a little difficult to detect irregularities under the relay system; but what of that? Is the great manufacturing interest of this country to be treated as a secondary matter in order to save some little trouble to Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors of Factories?"<sup>3</sup>

All these shifts naturally were of no avail. The Factory Inspectors appealed to the Law Courts. But soon such a cloud of dust in the way of petitions from the masters overwhelmed the Home Secretary, Sir

<sup>1</sup> *Reports, &c., for 30th April, 1848*, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Thus, among others, Philanthropist Ashworth to Leonard Horner, in a disgusting Quaker letter. (*Reports, &c., April, 1849*, p. 4.)

<sup>3</sup> l. c., p. 140.

George Grey, that in a circular of August 5th, 1848, he recommends the inspectors not "to lay informations against mill-owners for a breach of the letter of the Act, or for employment of young persons by relays in cases in which there is no reason to believe that such young persons have been actually employed for a longer period than that sanctioned by law." Hereupon, Factory Inspector J. Stuart allowed the so-called relay system during the 15 hours of the factory day throughout Scotland, where it soon flourished again as of old. The English Factory Inspectors, on the other hand, declared that the Home Secretary had no power dictatorially to suspend the law, and continued their legal proceedings against the pro-slavery rebellion.

But what was the good of summoning the capitalists when the Courts, in this case the country magistrates—Cobbett's "Great Unpaid"—acquitted them? In these tribunals, the masters sat in judgment on themselves. An example. One Eskrigge, cotton-spinner, of the firm of Kershaw, Leese, & Co., had laid before the Factory Inspector of his district the scheme of a relay system intended for his mill. Receiving a refusal, he at first kept quiet. A few months later, an individual named Robinson, also a cotton-spinner, and if not his Man Friday, at all events related to Eskrigge, appeared before the borough magistrates of Stockport on a charge of introducing the identical



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plan of relays invented by Eskrigge. Four Justices sat, among them three cotton-spinners, at their head this same inevitable Eskrigge. Eskrigge acquitted Robinson, and now was of opinion that what was right for Robinson was fair for Eskrigge. Supported by his own legal decision, he introduced the system at once into his own factory.<sup>1</sup> Of course, the composition of this tribunal was in itself a violation of the law.<sup>2</sup> These judicial farces, exclaims Inspector Howell, "urgently call for a remedy—either that the law should be so altered as to be made to conform to these decisions, or that it should be administered by a less fallible tribunal, whose decisions would conform to the law . . . when these cases are brought forward. I long for a stipendiary magistrate."<sup>3</sup>

The Crown lawyers declared the masters' interpretation of the Act of 1848 absurd. But the Saviours of Society would not allow themselves to be turned from their purpose. Leonard Horner reports, "Having endeavoured to enforce the Act . . . by ten prosecutions in seven magisterial divisions, and having been supported by the magistrates in one case only, . . . I

<sup>1</sup> *Reports, &c., for 30th April, 1849*, pp. 21, 22. Cf. like examples *ibid.*, pp. 4, 5.

<sup>2</sup> By I. and II. Will. IV., ch. 24, s. 10, known as Sir John Hobhouse's Factory Act, it was forbidden to any owner of a cotton-spinning or weaving mill, or the father, son, or brother of such owner, to act as Justice of the Peace in any inquiries that concerned the Factory Act.

<sup>3</sup> *l. c.*

considered it useless to prosecute more for this evasion of the law. That part of the Act of 1848 which was framed for securing uniformity in the hours of work, . . . is thus no longer in force in my district (Lancashire). Neither have the sub-inspectors or myself any means of satisfying ourselves, when we inspect a mill working by shifts, that the young persons and women are not working more than 10 hours a-day. . . . In a return of the 30th April, . . . of mill-owners working by shifts, the number amounts to 114, and has been for some time rapidly increasing. In general, the time of working the mill is extended to  $13\frac{1}{2}$  hours, from 6 a.m. to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  p.m., . . . in some instances it amounts to 15 hours, from  $5\frac{1}{2}$  a.m. to  $8\frac{1}{2}$  p.m.”<sup>1</sup> Already, in December, 1848, Leonard Horner had a list of 65 manufacturers and 29 overlookers who unanimously declared that no system of supervision could, under this relay system, prevent enormous overwork.<sup>2</sup> Now, the same children and young persons were shifted from the spinning-room to the weaving-room, now, during 15 hours, from one factory to another.<sup>3</sup> How was it possible to control a system which, “under the guise of relays, is some one of the many plans for shuffling ‘the hands’ about in endless variety, and shifting the hours of work and of rest for different

<sup>1</sup> *Reports, &c., for 30th April, 1849*, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Reports, &c., for 31st October, 1849*, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Reports, &c., for 30th April, 1849*, p. 21.

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individuals throughout the day, so that you may never have one complete set of hands working together in the same room at the same time.”<sup>1</sup>

But altogether independently of actual overwork, this so-called relay-system was an offspring of capitalistic fantasy such as Fourier, in his humorous sketches of “*Courtes Séances*,” has never surpassed, except that the “attraction of labour” was changed into the attraction of capital. Look, for example, at those schemes of the masters which the “respectable” press praised as models of “what a reasonable degree of care and method can accomplish.” The *personnel* of the workpeople was sometimes divided into from 12 to 14 categories, which themselves constantly changed and rechanged their constituent parts. During the 15 hours of the factory day, capital dragged in the labourer now for 30 minutes, now for an hour, and then pushed him out again, to drag him into the factory and to thrust him out afresh, hounding him hither and thither, in scattered shreds of time, without ever losing hold of him until the full 10 hours’ work was done. As on the stage, the same persons had to appear in turns in the different scenes of the different acts. But as an actor during the whole course of the play belongs to the stage, so the operatives, during 15 hours, belonged to the factory, without reckoning the time for going and coming. Thus the hours of

<sup>1</sup> *Reports, &c., for 1st October, 1848*, p. 95.

rest were turned into hours of enforced idleness, which drove the youths to the pot-house, and the girls to the brothel. At every new trick that the capitalist, from day to day, hit upon for keeping his machinery going 12 or 15 hours without increasing the number of his hands, the worker had to swallow his meals now in this fragment of time, now in that. At the time of the 10 hours' agitation, the masters cried out that the working mob petitioned in the hope of obtaining 12 hours' wages for 10 hours' work. Now they reversed the medal. They paid 10 hours' wages for 12 or 15 hours' lordship over labour-power.<sup>1</sup> This was the gist of the matter, this the master's interpretation of the 10 hours' law! These were the same unctuous free-traders, perspiring with the love of humanity, who for full 10 years, during the Anti-Corn Law agitation, had preached to the operatives, by a reckoning of pounds, shillings, and pence, that with free importation of corn, and with the means possessed by English industry, 10 hours' labour would be quite enough to enrich the capitalists.<sup>2</sup> This revolt of capital, after two years, was at last crowned with

<sup>1</sup> See *Reports, &c., for 30th April, 1849*, p. 6, and the detailed explanation of the "shifting system," by Factory Inspectors Howell and Saunders, in *Reports, &c., for 31st October, 1848*. See also the petition to the Queen from the clergy of Ashton and vicinity, in the spring of 1849, against the "shift system."

<sup>2</sup> Cf., for example, *The Factory Question and the Ten Hours' Bill*, by R. H. Greg, 1837.

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victory by a decision of one of the four highest Courts of Justice in England, the Court of Exchequer, which in a case brought before it on February 8th, 1850, decided that the manufacturers were certainly acting against the sense of the Act of 1844, but that this Act itself contained certain words that rendered it meaningless. "By this decision, the Ten Hours' Act was abolished."<sup>1</sup> A crowd of masters, who until then had been afraid of using the relay-system for young persons and women, now took it up heart and soul.<sup>2</sup>

But on this apparently decisive victory of capital, followed at once a revulsion. The workpeople had hitherto offered a passive, although inflexible and unremitting resistance. They now protested in Lancashire and Yorkshire in threatening meetings. The pretended Ten Hours' Act, was thus simple humbug, parliamentary cheating, had never existed! The Factory Inspectors urgently warned the Government that the antagonism of classes had arrived at an incredible tension. Some of the masters themselves murmured: "On account of the contradictory decisions of the magistrates, a condition of things altogether abnormal and anarchical obtains. One law

<sup>1</sup> F. Engels: "The English Ten Hours' Bill." (In the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung, Politisch-ökonomische Revue*. Edited by K. Marx. April number, 1850, p. 13.) The same "high" Court of Justice discovered, during the American Civil War, a verbal ambiguity which exactly reversed the meaning of the law against the arming of pirate ships.

<sup>2</sup> *Rep., &c., for 30th April, 1850.*

holds in Yorkshire, another in Lancashire ; one law in one parish of Lancashire, another in its immediate neighbourhood. The manufacturer in large towns could evade the law, the manufacturer in country districts could not find the people necessary for the relay-system, still less for the shifting of hands from one factory to another," &c. And the first birthright of capital is equal exploitation of labour-power by all capitalists.

Under these circumstances a compromise between masters and men was effected that received the seal of Parliament in the additional Factory Act of August 5th, 1850. The working day for "young persons and women," was raised from 10 to 10½ hours for the first five days of the week, and was shortened to 7½ on the Saturday. The work was to go on between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.,<sup>1</sup> with pauses of not less than 1½ hours for meal-times, these meal-times to be allowed at one and the same time for all, and conformably to the conditions of 1844. By this an end was put to the relay-system once for all.<sup>2</sup> For children's labour, the Act of 1844 remained in force.

One set of masters, this time as before, secured to

<sup>1</sup> In winter, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. may be substituted.

<sup>2</sup> "The present law (of 1850) was a compromise whereby the employed surrendered the benefit of the Ten Hours' Act for the advantage of one uniform period for the commencement and termination of the labour of those whose labour is restricted."  
—(*Reports, &c., for 30th April, 1852*, p. 14.)

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itself special seignourial rights over the children of the proletariat. These were the silk manufacturers. In 1833 they had howled out in threatening fashion, "if the liberty of working children of any age for 10 hours a day were taken away, it would stop their works."<sup>1</sup> It would be impossible for them to buy a sufficient number of children over 13. They extorted the privilege they desired. The pretext was shown on subsequent investigation to be a deliberate lie.<sup>2</sup> It did not, however, prevent them, during 10 years, from spinning silk 10 hours a day out of the blood of little children who had to be placed upon stools for the performance of their work.<sup>2</sup> The Act of 1844 certainly "robbed" them of the "liberty" of employing children under 11 longer than 6½ hours a day. But it secured to them, on the other hand, the privilege of working children between 11 and 13, 10 hours a day, and of annulling in their case the education made compulsory for all other factory children. This time the pretext was "the delicate texture of the fabric in which they were employed, requiring a lightness of touch, only to be acquired by their early introduction to these factories."<sup>2</sup> The children were slaughtered out-and-out for the sake of their delicate fingers, as in Southern Russia the horned cattle for the sake of their hide and tallow. At length, in 1850, the privilege granted in 1844 was limited to

<sup>1</sup> *Reports, &c., for Sept., 1844*, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> l. c.

the departments of silk-twisting and silk-winding. But here, to make amends to capital bereft of its "freedom," the work time for children from 11 to 13 was raised from 10 to 10½ hours. Pretext: "Labour in silk mills was lighter than in mills for other fabrics, and less likely in other respects also to be prejudicial to health."<sup>1</sup> Official medical inquiries proved afterwards that, on the contrary, "the average death-rate is exceedingly high in the silk districts, and amongst the female part of the population is higher even than it is in the cotton districts of Lancashire."<sup>2</sup> Despite the protests of the Factory Inspector, renewed every 6 months, the mischief continues to this hour.<sup>3</sup> (For note see the foot of the next page.)

The Act of 1850 changed the 15 hours' time from 6 a.m. to 8.30 p.m., into the 12 hours from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. for "young persons and women" only. It did not, therefore, affect children who could always be employed for half an hour before and 2½ hours after this period, provided the whole of their labour did not exceed 6½ hours. Whilst the bill was under discussion, the Factory Inspectors laid before Parliament

<sup>1</sup> *Reports, &c., for 31st Oct., 1861*, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *I. c.*, p. 27. On the whole the working population, subject to the Factory Act, has greatly improved physically. All medical testimony agrees on this point, and personal observation at different times has convinced me of it. Nevertheless, and exclusive of the terrible death rate of children in the first years of their life, the official reports of Dr. Greenhow show the unfavourable health condition of the manufacturing districts as compared with "agri-



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statistics of the infamous abuses due to this anomaly. To no purpose. In the background lurked the intention of screwing up, during prosperous years, the working day of adult males to 15 hours by the aid of the children. The experience of the three following years showed that such an attempt must come to grief cultural districts of normal health." As evidence, take the following table from his 1861 report :—

Percentage of Adult Males engaged in manufactures.	Death-rate from Pulmonary Affections per 100,000 Males.	Name of District.	Death-rate from Pulmonary Affections per 100,000 Females.	Percentage of Adult Females engaged in manufactures.	Kind of Female Occupation.
14.9	598	Wigan	644	18.0	Cotton
42.6	708	Blackburn	734	34.9	Do.
37.3	547	Halifax	564	20.4	Worsted
41.9	611	Bradford	603	30.0	Do.
31.0	691	Macclesfield	804	26.0	Silk
14.9	588	Leek	705	17.2	Do.
36.6	721	Stoke-upon-Trent	665	19.3	Earthenware
30.4	726	Woolstanton	727	13.9	Do.
	305	Eight healthy agricultural districts	340		

<sup>3</sup> It is well-known with what reluctance the English "free traders" gave up the protective duty on the silk manufacture. Instead of the protection against French importation, the absence of protection to English factory children now serves their turn.

against the resistance of the adult male operatives. The Act of 1850 was therefore finally completed in 1853 by forbidding the "employment of children in the morning before and in the evening after young persons and women." Henceforth with a few exceptions the Factory Act of 1850 regulated the working day of all workers in the branches of industry that come under it.<sup>1</sup> Since the passing of the first Factory Act half a century had elapsed.<sup>2</sup>

Factory legislation for the first time went beyond its original sphere in the "Printworks' Act of 1845." The displeasure with which capital received this new "extravagance" speaks through every line of the Act. It limits the working day for children from 8 to 13,

<sup>1</sup> During 1859 and 1860, the zenith years of the English cotton industry, some manufacturers tried, by the decoy bait of higher wages for overtime, to reconcile the adult male operatives to an extension of the working day. The hand-mule spinners and self-actor minders put an end to the experiment by a petition to their employers in which they say, "Plainly speaking, our lives are to us a burthen; and, while we are confined to the mills *nearly two days a week more* than the other operatives of the country, we feel like helots in the land, and that we are perpetuating a system injurious to ourselves and future generations. . . . This, therefore, is to give you most respectful notice that when we commence work again after the Christmas and New Year's holidays, we shall work 60 hours per week, and no more, or from six to six, with one hour and a half out." (*Reports, &c., for 30th April, 1860*, p. 30.)

<sup>2</sup> On the means that the wording of this Act afforded for its violation, cf. the Parliamentary Return *Factory Regulations Act* (6th August, 1859), and in it Leonard Horner's "Suggestions for amending the Factory Acts to enable the Inspectors to prevent illegal working, now become very prevalent."

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and for women to 16 hours, between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m., without any legal pause for meal times. It allows males over 13 to be worked at will day and night.<sup>1</sup> It is a Parliamentary abortion.<sup>2</sup>

However, the principle had triumphed with its victory in those great branches of industry which form the most characteristic creation of the modern mode of production. Their wonderful development from 1853 to 1860, hand-in-hand with the physical and moral regeneration of the factory workers, struck the most purblind. The masters from whom the legal limitation and regulation had been wrung step by step after a civil war of half a century, themselves referred ostentatiously to the contrast with the branches of exploitation still "free."<sup>3</sup> The Pharisees of "political economy" now proclaimed the discernment of the necessity of a legally fixed working day as a characteristic new discovery of their "science."<sup>4</sup> It will be easily understood that after the factory

<sup>1</sup> "Children of the age of 8 years and upwards, have, indeed, been employed from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. during the last half year in my district." (*Reports, &c., for 31st October, 1857*, p. 39.)

<sup>2</sup> "The Printworks' Act is admitted to be a failure, both with reference to its educational and protective provisions." (*Reports, &c., for 31st October, 1862*, p. 52.)

<sup>3</sup> Thus, e.g., E. Potter in a letter to the *Times* of March 24th, 1863. The *Times* reminded him of the manufacturers' revolt against the Ten Hours' Bill.

<sup>4</sup> Thus, among others, Mr. W. Newmarch, collaborator and editor of Tooke's *History of Prices*. Is it a scientific advance to make cowardly concessions to public opinion?

magnates had resigned themselves and become reconciled to the inevitable, the power of resistance of capital gradually weakened, whilst at the same time the power of attack of the working class grew with the number of its allies in the classes of society not immediately interested in the question. Hence the comparatively rapid advance since 1860.

The dye-works and bleach-works all came under the Factory Act of 1850 in 1860 ;<sup>1</sup> lace and stocking manufactures in 1861.

<sup>1</sup> The Act passed in 1860, determined that, in regard to dye and bleach works, the working day should be fixed on August 1st, 1861, provisionally at 12 hours, and definitely on August 1st, 1862, at 10 hours, i.e., at 10½ hours for ordinary days, and 7½ for Saturday. Now, when the fatal year, 1862, came, the old farce was repeated. Besides, the manufacturers petitioned Parliament to allow the employment of young persons and women for 12 hours during one year longer. "In the existing condition of the trade (the time of the cotton famine), it was greatly to the advantage of the operatives to work 12 hours per day, and make wages when they could." A bill to this effect had been brought in, "and it was mainly due to the action of the operative bleachers in Scotland that the bill was abandoned." (*Reports, &c., for 31st October, 1862*, pp. 14-15.) Thus defeated by the very work-people, in whose name it pretended to speak, Capital discovered, with the help of lawyer spectacles, that the Act of 1860, drawn up, like all the Acts of Parliament for the "protection of labour," in equivocal phrases, gave them a pretext to exclude from its working the calenderers and finishers. English jurisprudence, ever the faithful servant of capital, sanctioned in the Court of Common Pleas this piece of pettifoggery. "The operatives have been greatly disappointed . . . they have complained of overwork, and it is greatly to be regretted that the clear intention of the legislature should have failed by reason of a faulty definition." (l. c., p. 18.)

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In consequence of the first report of the Commission on the employment of children (1863), the same fate was shared by the manufacturers of all earthenwares (not merely pottery), lucifer-matches, percussion-caps, cartridges, carpets, fustian-cutting, and many processes included under the name of "finishing." In the year 1863 bleaching in the open air<sup>1</sup> and baking

<sup>1</sup> The "open-air bleachers" had evaded the law of 1860 by means of the lie that no women worked at it in the night. The lie was exposed by the Factory Inspectors, and at the same time Parliament was, by petitions from the operatives, bereft of its notions as to the cool meadow-fragrance, in which bleaching in the open-air was reported to take place. In this aerial-bleaching, drying-rooms were used at temperatures of from 90° to 100° Fahrenheit, in which the work was done for the most part by girls. "Cooling" is the technical expression for their occasional escape from the drying-rooms into the fresh air. "Fifteen girls in stoves. Heat from 80° to 90° for linens, and 100° and upwards for cambrics. Twelve girls ironing and doing-up in a small room about 10 feet square, in the centre of which is a close stove. The girls stand round the stove, which throws out a terrific heat, and dries the cambrics rapidly for the ironers. The hours of work for these hands are unlimited. If busy, they work till 9 or 12 at night for successive nights." (*Reports, &c., for 31st October, 1862*, p. 56.) A medical man states: "No special hours are allowed for cooling, but if the temperature gets too high, or the workers' hands get soiled from perspiration, they are allowed to go out for a few minutes. . . . My experience, which is considerable, in treating the diseases of stove workers, compels me to express the opinion that their sanitary condition is by no means so high as that of the operatives in a spinning factory (and Capital, in its memorials to Parliament, had painted them as floridly healthy, after the manner of Rubens). The diseases most observable amongst them are phthisis, bronchitis, irregularity of uterine functions, hysteria in its most aggravated forms, and rheumatism. All of these, I believe, are either directly or indirectly

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were placed under special Acts, by which, in the former, the labour of young persons and women during the night-time (from 8 in the evening to 6 in the morning), and in the latter, the employment of journeymen bakers under 18, between 9 in the evening and 5 in the morning were forbidden. We shall return to the later proposals of the same Commission, which threatened to deprive of their "freedom" all the important branches of English Industry, with the exception of agriculture, mines, and the means of transport.<sup>1</sup>

induced by the impure, overheated air of the apartments in which the hands are employed, and the want of sufficient comfortable clothing to protect them from the cold, damp atmosphere, in winter, when going to their homes." (l. c., pp. 56-57.) The Factory Inspectors remarked on the supplementary law of 1860, torn from these open-air bleachers: "The Act has not only failed to afford that protection to the workers which it appears to offer, but contains a clause . . . apparently so worded that, unless persons are detected working after 8 o'clock at night they appear to come under no protective provisions at all, and if they do so work, the mode of proof is so doubtful that a conviction can scarcely follow." (l. c., p. 52.) "To all intents and purposes, therefore, as an Act for any benevolent or educational purpose, it is a failure; since it can scarcely be called benevolent to permit, which is tantamount to compelling, women and children to work 14 hours a day with or without meals, as the case may be, and perhaps for longer hours than these, without limit as to age, without reference to sex, and without regard to the social habits of the families of the neighbourhood, in which such works (bleaching and dyeing) are situated." (*Reports, &c., for 30th April, 1863*, p. 40.)

<sup>1</sup> Note to the 2nd Ed. Since 1866, when I wrote the above passages, a re-action has again set in.

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